Encounter

A long Story by a young Soviet Writer

"THE TRIAL BEGINS . . ."

СУД ИДЁТ

By ABRAM TERTZ

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Bolshevism Re-visited

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The Uses of Television

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Abram Tertz

"The Trial Begins. . ."

Prologue

WHENEVER I was at the end of my strength, I climbed up on the window-sill and poked my head out through the narrow window. Down below, galoshes squelched and cats cried like children. Thus, for a few moments, I hung over the city, gulping its raw, damp air; then I jumped back on the floor and lit another cigarette. That was how I wrote this story.

I hadn't heard them knock. There were two of them in plain clothes standing in the doorway. They had modest, thoughtful faces and they looked like twins.

One of them went through my pockets. Then he made a small, neat pile of the sheets of paper scattered on the table and, moistening his fingers, counted them; there were seven altogether. He ran his hand over the first page and, presumably by way of censorship, scooped up all the letters and punctuation marks. One flick of the hand and there on the blank paper was a writhing heap of purple marks. The young man put them in his pocket.

One letter—I think it was an *"S"*—flicked its tail and tried to wriggle out, but he deftly caught it, tore off its legs, and squashed it with his finger-nail.

In the meantime, his companion was listing in his notebook all the details of my private life. He tapped the walls, went through my linen, and even turned the socks inside out. I felt embarrassed, as if I were before a medical board.

"Are you arresting me?"

The two plain-clothes men shyly hung their heads in silence. I was not aware of having done anything wrong but I realised that those above knew better and I humbly waited for my fate.

When they had finished, one of them glanced at his watch and said:

"You are being trusted."

One wall of my room thinned, grew lighter, and became transparent. Through it, as through a sheet of glass, I saw the Town.

Temples and ministries rose like coral reefs. Orders and decorations, shields and emblems, clung to spires of multi-storeyed buildings. Ornaments of pure gold, moulded, cast or fretted, covered the façades of huge stone piles. Granite dressed in lace, reinforced concrete painted with frescoes of monograms and garlands, stainless steel coated in cream for beauty, all told of the wealth of those who lived in the Great City.

While above the roofs, amid the ragged clouds crimsoned by the rising sun, I saw a hand. Such

THIS *"philosophical fable," which has been translated from the Russian by Max Hayward, is by a young Soviet writer. His anonymous original manuscript reached friends in Paris only recently, and he has agreed to its publication, suggesting the nom-de-plume "Abram Tertz." This long story, or novella, is (if not the only) one of the few authentic documents of the younger Soviet literary generation we know (there was a startling "unauthorised" exhibition of paintings by a young Soviet artist in France last year). Not unlike many other remarkable works of the contemporary Russian imagination, Zamyatin's* WE, *Ehrenburg's* JURENITO, *Pilnyak's* MAHOGANY, *etc., it receives its first publication in the West. The young Soviet author of* THE TRIAL BEGINS *can perhaps be also associated with the extraordinary critique of the doctrine of Socialist Realism (pleading almost for a notion of "socialist surrealism") which has recently been translated in the French review* L'ESPRIT. *A further note about this and Abram Tertz will be found in this number of* ENCOUNTER *among "Authors."*

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was the invincible strength of the blood-suffused fingers, clenched into a fist and motionless above the earth, that I shivered with delight. Closing my eyes, I fell upon my knees and heard the Master speak. His voice came straight from heaven, at moments thundering like an artillery barrage, at others purring gently like an aeroplane. The two young men stood stiffly to attention.

He spoke:

"Mortal, arise. Behold the hand of god. Wherever you may steal away and hide, it will reach and find you, merciful and chastising. Behold!"

The hand in the sky cast a huge shadow. Where it fell the streets and houses opened out; the city was sliced open like a cake and you could see its stuffing: cosy flats, and people sleeping singly or in pairs. Big hairy men smacked their lips like babies and their plump wives smiled mysteriously in their sleep. Their even breathing rose towards the reddening sky.

Only one man was awake at this early hour. Standing at his window he was looking at the Town.

"Do you recognise him, writer?" the divine voice murmured in my ear. "He is the hero of your tale, Vladimir, my beloved and faithful servant. Follow him, dog his footsteps, defend him with your life. Exalt him! Be my prophet. Let the light prevail, and let the enemy tremble at your word."

The voice ceased. But the wall remained transparent like a sheet of glass, and I could still see the clenched fist poised above me in the sky. Its violence increased and the knuckles whitened with the tension. The man still stood at his window looking at the sleeping town.

Now he buttoned up his uniform and raised his hand. It looked small and puny when compared to the right hand of god, but its gesture was just as menacing and just as magnificent.

I

CITIZEN S. Y. Rabinovich, a gynaecologist by profession, had unlawfully procured an abortion. As he leafed through the notes of the interrogation, Vladimir Petrovich Globov frowned fastidiously. He had finished his night's work, the sun had risen, and now here was this obscene character with a name out of a funny story crawling out of an unnumbered, battered file. Scarcely a job worthy of the City Public Prosecutor.

He had already had occasion to prosecute at least one Rabinovich, if not two or three. Indeed, they were too many to remember. Every schoolboy knew today that these people with their petty-bourgeois instincts were born enemies of socialism. There were exceptions, of course—Ilya Ehrenburg, for example. But as against that, you had only to think of Trotsky, Radek, Zinovyev, Kamenev, the homeless cosmopolitans . . . people with an inborn love of treachery.

He felt a slight pain in his heart. He unbuttoned his coat and shirt and squinted down at his chest. There, under the left nipple, next to the scar left by a kulak's bullet, was a blue heart pierced by an arrow. He stroked the old tattoo marks; they went back to his youth. One heart—the one transfixed—dripped pale-blue blood; the other ached agreeably from fatigue and the cares of office.

Before going to bed the Public Prosecutor stood for a short while at his window and surveyed the city. The streets were still deserted. But the militiaman at the cross-roads was, as usual, directing the traffic. At a wave of his conductor's baton invisible crowds surged forward or stopped dead.

The Public Prosecutor did up all the buttons of his uniform and raised his hand. He felt, "God is with us." He thought, "Victory is ours!"

*

THE rain streamed down Karlinsky's face. His socks were sticking to his feet. "I'll give her five more minutes," he decided, "then I'll go." But it was too much for him and he started for home.

"Where are you off to, Yury Mikhaylovich?" Standing in the wet square Marina looked improbably dry. "Chivalry is dead, I see." Her smile was sweet and imperious and she pointed to a dry spot beneath her umbrella. "Come here at once."

"Good morning, Marina Pavlovna, I'd given you up. The militiaman was getting restless, in case I meant to take advantage of the cloudburst to blow up Pushkin's monument."

Marina laughed: "First I have to make a telephone-call."

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The rain beat down and ricocheted on the asphalt; the square was a sea of bubbles; the telephone-booth was an island. They dashed towards it, braving wind and water. Yury surreptitiously dried his hands on Marina's waist. "You smell like a wet rag," she said. Before he could take offence she had dialled her number and said "Hello," with a foreign intonation. "Hello," she said again, pronouncing the melodious exotic word with a sulky tremolo on the top note.

"Is that you, Volodya? I can't hear you." To hear better she moved closer to Yury. He could feel the fragrant warmth of her cheek.

"Speak louder! What's that? What? Don't wait dinner for me. I'll be back late—I'm dining out."

The receiver gurgled helplessly. Her husband was protesting at the other end of the line. Yury took Marina's hand and kissed it. He forgave her everything: his water-logged shoes and the fact that she was unapproachable. Her voice was serpentine.

"Do go to the concert to-night. Yes, without me. Please! I'll explain later. . . . What's that? Oh, yes . . . I too."

She was deceiving her silly, trusting husband. "How did you like that, poor old Public Prosecutor!" thought Karlinsky. "She said, 'I too,' so as not to say, 'I kiss you too.' That was because I stood beside her and touched her hand!"

"What are you so pleased about?" she asked in a surprised voice as she hung up the receiver. Karlinsky was behaving just as she had expected.

"Marina Pavlovna, I have been meaning for a long time to ask you an indiscreet question. . . ."

"Two if you like," she said with resigned boredom.

Yury thought, "You're a cunning devil, but I'll outsmart you," and asked ingratiatingly: "Do you believe in Communism? And secondly, since you don't mind: do you love your husband?"

*

"HELL, they've cut me off"—Globov breathed into the artificial silence of the telephone, but there was nothing further from Marina. In the next room Seryozha was conjugating his German verbs.

"Seryozha! Come here a moment."

"Did you call me, Father?"

"Hard at work, are you? I've finished mine. Worked like a beaver all night long. . . . Look, will you keep me company? It's my day off after all. We'll gossip for a while and then go for a drive. Then to-night we'll buzz off to the concert. What do you say to that?"

"What about Marina Pavlovna?"

"Your mother's dining with a friend. Well? Agreed?"

Seryozha made no objection.

"One thing I meant to ask you, Seryozha. . . . I went to the parents' meeting at your school last Wednesday. There was a lot of talk about you. All to your credit, as usual. Only afterwards, the history teacher—what's his name?—Valeryan . . ."

"Valeryan Valeryanovich."

"That's it. . . . Well, he took me aside and whispered something about having to be careful. 'You know,' he said, 'your son keeps on asking awkward questions and, in general, he shows signs of a morbid curiosity.' . . ."

The Prosecutor paused. Then, as Seryozha said nothing, asked casually:

"Is it women you are interested in, Seryozha?"

Seryozha shone with an unbearable pink light. Just like a girl, thought his father fondly. He knew that Seryozha's sins were of a different order, but since, for educational reasons, he wished him to confess of his own accord, he went on with the inquisition:

"Well, there's no harm in thinking about women now and again. I was quite a lad at your age—the brightest in the village, I might almost say. . . . But why discuss it with your teachers? Couldn't you have asked me? . . ."

"But it wasn't that at all," Seryozha implored. "I asked something completely different."

"Really."

"Of course! I asked him about history . . . and philosophy. About just and unjust wars, for instance."

"Wars?" Globov was taken aback, but he still pretended not to understand. "You're not joining the army next year, are you? What about the Institute?"

Seryozha rushed into explanations. No shameful thought had even crossed his mind. As for the teaching on just and unjust wars, it had originated with Marx and had later been developed by Lenin who applied it to the new historical setting. To prove his point Seryozha ran to his own room and brought back several notebooks, filled with minute writing.

"But what I couldn't understand was Valeryan Valeryanovich saying that Yermak's conquest of Siberia was just, and so was the crushing of Shamil's rebellion. . . ."

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"Yes," said Globov thoughtfully, "we can't do without Siberia. Nor without the Caucasus. Oil. Manganese. You know the folk-song? 'Upon the peaceful bank of the Irtysh, Yermak sat deep in thought.' Remember?"

"And when the English conquered India, they also. . . ."

"You stop making such comparisons," cried Vladimir Petrovich in alarm. "What have the English got to do with it? Where do you think we're living? In England?"

He thought for a moment. Really, England was quite irrelevant. Why England?

"But historically speaking. . . ."

"Historically speaking my foot! Study history by all means, but don't forget the present day. Think of what we're building! Think of what we have achieved already! Well, there you are. In the final analysis, if you see what I mean—*ultimately*—our ancestors were right. What they did was just."

His father was right, but Seryozha felt sorry for Shamil. After all, how could Shamil know the Revolution would take place in Russia? All he wanted was to free his own people; it was only afterwards that it turned out to be wrong and even anti-socialist as well.

"Yury Mikhaylovich now, he explains it differently. He says it all depends on your point of view. One man's justice is another man's injustice. But, then, where do you get *real* justice?"

Karlinsky again! Globov suppressed a curse. "You leave all this hair-splitting alone, Seryozha. Yury Mikhaylovich is a learned man, of course, and he's a good friend of Marina Pavlovna's . . . but you don't have to take everything he says. . . . Now then, let's have it from the beginning: what other questions have you been pestering your teachers with?"

*

"IT ALL depends on your point of view, dear Marina Pavlovna. Let's examine yours."

Karlinsky puffed at a cigarette (it was his favourite brand) and watched Marina eat. A small, provocative birth-mark set off the dazzling whiteness of her skin, but already there was a slight sag in her cheeks, an ominous fold under her chin.

She bit into a cake, baring her gums to avoid smudging her lipstick.

"Marina Pavlovna!"

She turned her blank face slowly, displaying it from every side.

"As we are friends—we are, aren't we?—I'll take the risk of speaking frankly. It's not for love. . . ." He lowered his voice; at the next table two young men were stolidly sipping cognac. . . . "I mean, it wasn't out of love of country and of Communism that you married your husband, was it? You, who are so clever and so beautiful. . . . You know that you *are* beautiful?"

"I know." She smiled faintly with amusement.

"And clever?"

"Yes, I know."

"I love talking with you. It's like eating spiced tomatoes. And the atmosphere in this café induces frankness. It's colourful."

Yury pointed with his chin, inviting her to look round. One of the young men at the next table insisted stubbornly: "I adore the clink of glasses." His friend crossed himself with the piece of ham stuck on his fork, swallowed the ham, and added: "A woman's body is an amphora filled with wine."

"Isn't it time we filled up our amphoras," said Karlinsky. "But what shall we drink to? To the ideals you are so determined to keep dark?"

Marina shrugged her shoulders:

"I'm no good at talking about abstractions, Yury Mikhaylovich."

"What about personal things then?"

"Even less."

"I see. You like riddles. It's true that every pretty woman likes to be mysterious. But it's dangerous to be too frank with you, Marina Pavlovna. You are a terribly good listener."

"Yes."

"You watch, and you remember everything, and later. . . ."

"No, I don't always remember, but I always understand."

"I wish I did."

"What don't you understand?"

"Well, take your beauty, for example. How you can. . . ."

"How can I, beautiful and clever as I am, live with my husband? Is that what you mean?"

Karlinsky froze. Soft-footed, with bared teeth, his prey advanced upon him. Fox, mink, oh long-awaited silver sable!

The two young people at the neighbouring table were now pouring out their hearts.

"Honestly, Vitya, in all my life I've never harmed a fly."

"Thank you, Tolya, thank you for your understanding."

•

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"So you want to go in for law, Seryozha? A very sensible idea. Following in your father's footsteps? Good for you. . . . But, honestly, all your doubts and questions aren't worth a thing. All these talks you have with your Valeryan Valeryanovich, they're just childish nonsense. You're not old enough to understand affairs of state. Take those former prisoners of war, for instance, that you stick up for. Believe me, they're all cowards and traitors, and I know what I'm talking about. And then, what you said about wages. I suppose you'd put a cabinet-minister on the same footing as a charwoman and expect him to run the country for three hundred roubles a month? Do you imagine you and I know better than the people up above? Here you are, still conjugating German verbs and taking notes on philosophy, while they've discovered everything there is to know, they've summed it all up and worked it out to the last detail—including why you need your German verbs and your philosophy and what you'll do with them.

"Get one thing into your head. What matters is our Glorious Aim. And it's by this you have to measure every other thing—everything, from Shamil to Korea. The aim sanctifies the means, it justifies every sort of sacrifice. Millions of people—just think—millions have died for it. Think of the cost of the last war alone! And now you come along and quibble about details—this is wrong and that's unfair!

"Let me tell you a story. I'll never forget it as long as I live. There was a captain in the war who had been ordered to capture a hill. His men were tired and discipline was slack, nobody felt much like getting himself killed. Just then, a man was brought in—he'd been caught as a deserter escaping from the battlefield. The captain shot him out of hand in front of everybody, sent up his report, and led his unit into the attack.

"Well, we get the report. We investigate. And what do you think we find? The man wasn't a deserter at all. Another officer had sent him somewhere with a message, and the captain either hadn't known, or he forgot in the heat of the moment.

"Naturally, we send for the captain. What does he think he's doing? Arbitrary measures! Shooting people without trial! Give him hell! Send him to a punitive battalion!

"Well, as it turned out, the captain was no longer among the living, he'd been killed in action.

"What were we to do now? Shame a fallen officer before his men? Make them lose their confidence in their commanders? When, for all you know, it's just because he shot the fellow that he was able to control his men and carry out his orders.

"Remember, the hill was captured! The enemy was driven back! Frankly, at the time I looked at what had happened from that hilltop. And now you try and have a look. Well, budding Public Prosecutor, what's your verdict?"

"I don't want to be a Prosecutor."

"Oh! You'll be an advocate, will you, like Karlinsky? You see yourself making brilliant speeches for the defence?"

"No, I'll be a judge."

*

"I give in, I give in without a struggle, Marina Pavlovna. I entirely agree with you. The end justifies the means and the higher the end the more it justifies them. How strikingly you put it!. 'Beauty is not enough, its victory must be fought for. . . .' Excellent! So an experienced general hides behind this Renoir exterior! I'd never have known it. I'll tell you what, enrol me in your army. Beauty needs worship, the end needs means. Let me be the humble means of your all-justifying beauty. You won't regret it."

Karlinsky and Marina clinked glasses.

"Will you accept my offer?"

"I don't know. Let's talk about something else."

Marina's mind was wandering. Yury's was captured by an image from his distant childhood: the clever serpent handing a pink apple to a fair-haired Eve while Adam snoozes under a bush in paradise. To complete the picture, he pushed the bowl of fruit towards Marina.

"Try a peach, Marina Pavlovna. One should always eat a peach after a sweet wine."

*

The fat cloakroom attendant bustled, skipped, and even limped out of politeness. He was much older than Seryozha's father, yet when Globov took off his hat and threw down his galoshes he fell upon them, hugged them to the gold-braid on his breast and muttered, turning like a top and adding fond diminutives to every word: "Hat . . . galoshes . . . check. . . ."

Seryozha and his father went into the concert hall.

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Music scores and violin bows stirred. The impresario, a failed *wunderkind* bald from an excess of musical exertions, glided into the footlights and, almost like an incantation, carefully articulated all the titles of the renowned conductor. The concert began.

Seryozha watched the orchestra as the trumpeter, a man with ginger hair who looked like a boxer, puffed out his cheeks, and the violinists frantically waved their arms.

The music flowed. It oozed like oily, rainbow-patterned puddles. It rose. It roared and stormed off the stage into the body of the hall. Seryozha thought about the cloudburst in the streets outside and wriggled with pleasure. The music was like his private image of the revolution. The flood drowned the bourgeoisie in a most convincing way.

A general's wife in evening dress floundered, tried to scramble up a pillar and was washed away. The old general swam with a vigorous breast-stroke, but soon sank. Even the musicians were, by now, up to their necks in water. Eyes bulging, lips spitting foam, they fiddled frenziedly, randomly, below the surface of the waves.

One more onslaught. A lone usher, riding on a chair, swept past. The waves beat against the walls and lapped the portraits of the great composers. Ladies' handbags and torn tickets floated among the jetsam. Now and then, a bald head, white like an unripe water melon, slowly floated up out of the sonorous green depth and bobbed back out of sight.

"What music!" exclaimed Globov. "None of your Prokofiev or Khatchaturian. Real classical stuff."

He, too, was fascinated by the flood, but he understood it better than Seryozha. What struck him was that this surge of music wasn't left to its own devices; it was controlled by the conductor.

The conductor built dams, ditches, aqueducts, canalising the capricious elements in accordance with his blueprint. He directed the flood; at the sweep of his arm one stream froze, another flowed forward in its bed and turned a turbine.

Globov slipped into a seat in the front row. Never had he sat so close, never had he realised how hard was the conductor's work. No wonder! Think of having to keep an eye on all of them, from flute to drum, and force them all to play the same tune.

The conductor streamed with sweat, his jowls shook, his chest heaved hoarsely at each pause. From a distance he looked as graceful as a dancer who used arms instead of legs to dance. But here, close up, he was a butcher hacking carcasses and chopping ice, grunting out his short, thick breath at every stroke.

Louder and louder rose the music. There were no more streams and waterfalls—they had long since frozen—but icebergs floated down, as if the ice-age had come back, and cracked and ground against each other.

"Interval!" announced the youthful-looking impresario in a ringing voice.

II

MARINA, stripped in front of a cheval glass, was going through her morning exercises. The glass mirrored the silent dance of pink, oval shapes. It amused her to watch their play. She moved closer to the mirror and inspected her enlarged reflection in detail, and was reminded of a propeller: taut, trim blades running up and down from the narrow waist. The width of her shoulders balanced that of hips. In profile, the line from breast to buttock formed an "*S*": the sinusoid of her torso.

She made a strict businesslike check-up. Any sign of a flabby bottom or wrinkled neck? Unceremoniously, she rubbed her breasts, twisted her neck, and massaged her stomach. The mirror was her tool-bench, drawing-board and easel, the workshop of a woman whose ambition was beauty. She neither preened herself nor indulged her vanity, but briskly devoted herself to her work.

It was the 18th of September and Marina's thirtieth birthday. Some women, at this age celebrated by Balzac, give up their careers. A woman, lovely on her wedding day and who once, by accident, makes the cover of an illustrated weekly, has often spread by thirty like a melting ice. You see women walking about the streets, looking like eunuchs, waddling like

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pregnant dachshunds, or as scrawny as ostriches, swollen bodies, varicose veins, wadded breasts, and tight stays hidden by their clothes. Marina had no need of disguise. She looked elegant in any attitude—even on all fours with her tongue hanging out: not many women could keep their charm and dignity in such a posture. She held it before the mirror. Her indecent pose brought out the graceful curve of her back. It was awkward to stand on all fours with her mouth open but it proved that nothing could detract from the perfection of her face or body.

Other women used their beauty merely as a means. A pretty woman found it easier to get a husband or a lover. Some wanted to breed, making their maternal feelings the excuse (how timely had been her action against so graceless an outcome!). Others, it seemed, liked slobbering with a man in bed (poor, poor Volodya!). But no one knew that to be beautiful was itself a worthy and sufficient end, and that all the rest—men, money, clothes, apartments, cars—were only means to serve it.

Marina stepped aside and her reflection vanished from the mirror. In it, a bunch of flowers in a vase replaced her stomach. Higher up were cardboard boxes. She guessed that her husband had slipped into the bedroom while she was still asleep and piled up this edifice of birthday gifts. As usual, his purchases had been generous and haphazard. There was even a plaster bust of the Master, not to speak of sweets, perfumes, and other aids to beauty.

"And what are *you* doing here, old fellow?" asked Marina without turning round. "Great men are not supposed to watch naked ladies."

She wished that, in defiance of the laws of physics, she could fix her image on the polished surface of the glass for ever; that even in her absence the reflection of her beauty would remain intact. But this was difficult.

Meanwhile, the floorboards in the passage had been creaking for some time. It was Volodya, watching his wife and breathing through the keyhole like a little boy.

She stood before the mirror, naked and contemptuous. Neither ashamed nor pleased, she turned from side to side to make it easier for him to see all of her. She didn't mind. Why shouldn't he enjoy himself? It was her birthday after all. But he had better not expect her to have a child.

Finally, she put on her dressing-gown and, still without turning round, called out:

"Who's there? Come in."

"Many happy returns, Marina darling."

She kissed his cheek.

"Thank you for your presents, Volodya. They are all very nice. Only that one had better go into your study. It doesn't really suit my room. It's the wrong style."

*

As soon as they had drunk to their hostess and wished her many happy returns, the guests fell upon their food, and Karlinsky was able to devote his full attention to Marina. He sat on her right (her husband, as is customary on such occasion, was on her left) and made caustic comments on the guests, much to the amusement of Marina and the envy of the other men.

"The political loyalty of our gathering is ensured"—he nodded at the Interrogator, Skromnykh, an old friend of the family.

Marina was in excellent form. She laughed at Karlinsky's jokes, heaped food on her neighbours' plates, helped herself to the tidbits, and found time even for her husband, whose knee she brushed now and then with hers under the table. At the same time she directed the maid by a faint pointing of her lashes, keeping an eye on the conveyor belt of sauces, condiments, and wines. As a result, everyone was sharply conscious of her festive presence and ate, drank, and spoke for her sake alone. This pleased everybody, including herself.

Yury bent towards her. "Do you notice how fervently the custodian of State security boosts his offspring? All jailers are fond of children, I've noticed. Thus Nature keeps the balance between good and evil."

"And are Counsel for the Defence always spiteful and bad-tempered at home?"

"*Touché*. . . . But seriously, this babbling of fond parents is enough to turn one's heart to stone. You'd think every one of them was a sadistic hangman."

The conversation was indeed concerned with children.

"Where is Seryozha?" asked the wife of the Interrogator. And before Marina could tell her that her stepson was away—his whole school was at a kolkhoz helping with the potato harvest—Skromnykh was already saying: "My Boris, now . . ." and the company marvelled at the intelligence of Boris.

"Here's to the birth of a daughter to you, Marina Pavlovna." Skromnykh unexpectedly held up his glass. "We'll marry her to my Boris."

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"Surely she's not pregnant?" thought Yury. One look at her impassive face reassured him. It was just like the Interrogator to pair off children as yet unconceived.

Globov was surprised as well. What an eye that Skromnykh had! Not to give away the delightful secret too soon, he tapped his spoon against his glass and spoke:

"Experienced interrogator though you are, Arkadiy Gavrilovich, this time you have not enough to go on, so for the moment we'll adjourn the case for lack of evidence. Let's drink instead to all our children and to happy family life."

The toast was drunk.

"What is a family man? A family man is a man to be relied on by his friends, his colleagues, and the State. A man who surrounds himself with children is bound to be a good citizen. He thinks about his family, his future, his heirs; he is firmly rooted in his country's soil. He is like an open book."

Globov opened his hand as big as a plate and, clenching it again, went on:

"I personally am in favour of large families. I come from one myself. You can find us Globovs everywhere, like mushrooms in a field. We have been shot and slaughtered but they can't wipe us out, our breed goes on. My youngest brother is a Colonel in the Far East. Another runs a fishing combine on the Caspian. My sister is in Leningrad: her thesis has just been accepted. . . ."

He unbent his fingers one by one, beginning with the little finger, and now came to the index finger, straight and strong with a polished nail: this, presumably, was himself.

"And yet there are some people who preach childless marriages. You saw the paper yesterday—a whole feature-article on neo-Malthusianism. It's very widespread in the West, this neo-Malthusianism. And even here you still occasionally find something of the sort. One case has just come my way. . . ."

Leaning across the bottles, Globov whispered to the Interrogator. The guests looked down at their food, surmising that the conversation was about abortion.

Karlinsky suddenly felt sick. To take his mind off his stomach he thought about Malthus. There was some truth in every theory. How could you let the human race multiply *ad infinitum*? One day the Antarctic would be populated, so would the Sahara, but then what? Some universal remedy would have to be discovered.

Now it was well known that the human embryo, at some early stage of its development, had much in common with the fish. Why should the country waste its potential fish reserves? In the Splendid Future, the fish-like embryos would be turned to good account. Carefully extracted from the womb, they would be conditioned to a separate existence in special pools. There they would grow scales and fins under the supervision of the State, in the charge of some colleague of Globov's. Next door to the abortarium, there would be a canning factory producing tinned fish in vast quantities. Some embryos would be turned into sardines; others into sprats —all according to their national characteristics. And it would all be strictly in keeping with Marxism. Admittedly, it meant a return to cannibalism, but not to the consumption of our fellow-men as practised by primitive tribes: cannibalism on a more refined and altogether higher level. Spiral development.

Yury had quite stopped feeling sick. Now he was elated. Should he share his interesting discovery with Marina? But while he hesitated (was it a suitable subject for a lady?) Marina said:

"Volodya, stop whispering. Eat your fish."

*

THE needle hissed on the record. A tenor with a cold broke into a tango tune dating from the 'twenties.

It was an autumn day, the trees shed leaves,
A weary sorrow blossomed into crystal asters.

A Russian émigré in a Paris brothel was singing of unrequited love; and although there were no such things as crystal asters, they all felt moved when he exclaimed in sorrowful surprise:

Oh, those deep dark eyes!

An invisible choir caught up the refrain on a deeper note: *"Oh, those deep dark eyes!"*

"They held me bound," lamented the White emigré, and the chorus echoed softly:

They held me bound. . . .

Never shall I forget them,
They blaze before me. . . .

Globov carefully piloted Marina among the dancing couples. She kept time like an automaton, or as though hypnotised. She swayed, intoxicated, in surrender. Excitement bubbled in

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her like soda water, the bubbles rose up her spine and along her chilly neck, to the roots of her electrically-charged hair.

Oh, those deep dark eyes!

Whoever loves you
Will, for all eternity,
Lose happiness and peace.

"Oh, those deep dark eyes," moaned Marina.

She knew without having to look that no one in the room had eyes for anyone else but her. The dream of every man was to dance with her. And she wanted to go and on for ever, dancing to this tune of unrequited love, to dance across the world, changing countries, ages, partners, loving no one and swooning with the joy of being loved by all.

"To-night, I pick the tunes and the partners," she announced as she put on the record once again. As soon as the crystal asters (nowhere to be found on earth) bloomed, she drifted off in Karlinsky's arms.

Never can I forget them,
They blaze before me

—hummed Yury into the warm hollow of Marina's ear.

He was himself surprised that, with all his experience, he could be so moved by a cabaret song. For all his scoffing at its bourgeois exoticism, he could not dispel its subtly vulgar charm.

Crystal asters bloomed in groves of pineapple. Well-dressed men with canes and golden dentures strolled up and down in front of smart hotels against a backdrop of romantic scenery. Kindly ladies held court in boudoirs—or was it couloirs? Saxophones, gigolos, négligés, gondolas, condoms. Diving into glowing crystal glasses of liqueur. . . . Lou plus Sue equals love. Lu-es.

Marina clung to him, trusting and submissive. As though at last she had made her choice. As though she needed no one, no one in the world but Yury. As though affection—if not love—could be attained on earth.

But now she changed partners. She signalled to the Interrogator Skromnykh; he darted to her side, wagging his tail in anticipation, and whirled her away.

Globov watched the lonely figure of Karlinsky with a sardonic look, and turned back to the dancers, making a pretence of smoking a cigarette.

Marina danced, her face expressionless, upturned; torso, legs, and arms vibrated to the music, feet minced in step; but her gently swaying head was asleep. Moving through the room like a somnambulist, she stepped closer to her partner, stepped back, stepped forward. But her pale, set face and swaying head looked as if it had been severed from another body and took no part in all the bustle. Falling over his feet, her partner breathlessly enjoyed his moment, while all the other men impatiently awaited theirs. But Marina's face was calm, and she was absent, as if she didn't care who had her next.

Watching Marina's dead, impassive face, and the frenzied queue of men waiting their turn, Globov did not feel jealousy, but horror, at this public violation before his very eyes, in his own home. To put an end to the shameless scene, he went up to the jaded gramophone, stumbled as though by accident, and knocked it over.

*

YURY could not sleep. It often happened to him nowadays: he remembered that he must die, and lay awake. Usually it happened when he lay on his back.

His life was in no danger and, if he took care of himself and gave up smoking, he could hope to live another twenty, thirty, if not forty years. But the thought of death, even though it was twenty-five or even forty years away, was quite unbearable. It was very frightening to think that he would not be there while other men lived on.

It was not the coffin or the grave that frightened him. Chiefly it was the thought that after death there would be nothing ever, ever more. He would not have minded hell as much: let them fry him in a frying-pan, that at least would mean some sort of self-awareness.

As a child he had envied elephants because they lived a hundred and fifty years. (Pikes, it was said, lived two hundred.) When his father died he had had hysterics; he thought that he was sorry for the poor old man, but he was sorry for himself, for it was then he realised that he too would die; and for a long time afterwards he questioned people about life after death, hoping that it was true.

Why had they deprived people of faith? How could you replace personal survival by Communism? How could a thinking man have any purpose other than himself?

Feeling that he was dying, that he would cease to live that very instant, he sat up in bed and switched on the light. He coughed, and it reminded him that after *that* there would be no

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more coughing. His damp fingers touched the chair next to his bed; the chair would still be there (so would the chair-legs) after he was gone.

There was nobody he could confide in. Everyone would laugh at him and think to himself: "I too must die." He could expect no sympathy.

Self-deception was the only way out. This was the remedy in common use: anything to take your mind off this nothingness which could easily drive you mad. Some went in for politics, like that oaf Globov. Others, like Marina, escaped into . . . Marina! And here—here surely was his salvation! In this, the loveliest of all the women he had ever known.

Yury got up and lit a cigarette to help him get a firmer hold on his discovery before it slipped his mind. And as he blew the smoke out of his mouth, he felt alive, he knew that he was smoking, properly inhaling and blowing smoke out of his mouth, as dead men cannot do. And he rejoiced and he blew smoke out of his mouth, and he inhaled and he rejoiced again.

Marina was indeed an occupation worthy of his efforts. Long before this night he had intuitively, like a horse caught in a blizzard, found his own way out. He had offered himself to her as a means, nothing but a means to serve her beauty. He had praised and humoured her, he had lusted after her and fallen at her feet. Often she had disdained him, cast him off, as at the dance to-night. But it was only now that he could say, hand on heart, that he had made a great discovery, more significant perhaps than that of Archimedes.

Let Marina be his fulcrum. Marina, the inaccessible, who thought herself the sole end of creation, would be the means of curing his insomnia. As for the end—the end would be himself, Yury—and Yury's conquest of Marina. He would turn her own weapons against her, he would use all means, fair or foul, to prove his superiority. "Lord, how humiliating will be your fall! You can trust my modest experience to see to that."

Yury curled up in bed and, feeling he would now fall fast asleep, smiled contentedly to himself as he had not smiled for a long time past to anyone. He felt that he would have a long, long life, surviving everyone, perhaps even that he would never die. All the same, he did not switch off the light.

*

THE record was smashed and the evening ruined. Marina had been driven beyond the limits of her patience, and as soon as the last guest had said good-bye she declared war.

At first Globov parried her attacks with some success by pointing out that a self-respecting woman, dancing with Karlinsky, would not have let him stroke her back. She then reminded him of the plaster bust, and of his vulgar speech at dinner, and of his whispered conversation with Skromnykh which had lasted almost the whole evening; and finally, without giving him time to recover, she launched a general offensive.

Her face glowed with fury. It was a white-hot blade ready to strike, while her whole body, streamlined like a torpedo, quivered with impatience.

She did not shrink before extreme reprisals. She realised that in war pity was as dangerous as betrayal. She thought it wrong to condemn the use of poison gas and soft-nosed bullets on the grounds of their inhumanity. She was intelligent enough to imagine how painful it must be to die of ordinary thermite.

"So?" she said in answer to some stinging word of Globov's. "Well, you might as well know that there will be no child. I've had an abortion."

As after an atomic explosion, it was at first impossible to check the number of the victims, or the area of destruction. Everything had been rubbed off the face of the earth and there was no one left to fight. But somewhere on the outskirts there is always at least one survivor.

The survivor got up, shook himself, and stood twisting a teaspoon in his fingers—no doubt the blast had blown it into his sleeve out of the shattered window of some jeweller's shop. He saw that apart from this one teaspoon he had nothing left—no family, no home. Gradually, as he remembered more, he realised that his long-awaited daughter had been killed in the explosion and, as he tied the teaspoon pensively into a knot, that he had been dishonoured twice: once as a husband and once as a Public Prosecutor. At a loss to know what to do with the twisted spoon, or how to deal with Rabinovich, when his own wife . . . he said:

"What have you done? What have you done?" And, not to have to kill her, slapped her face.

Not to be killed, Marina ran into her room. She did not weep. Sitting before her mirror, she patted her outraged cheek with powder and stroked her lips; twisted with pain, they looked too large for her face.

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III

SPARTACUS were attacking. Their centre-forward, Honoured Master-of-Sports Skarlygin, was breaking through to the Dynamo goal.

Thousands of onlookers, including Public Prosecutor Globov, had their eyes glued on the famous athlete and were pushing him on by their united efforts. But the will of thousands of others, who were backing Dynamo and who wished Skarlygin to stumble, fall, or even break his neck, raised countless obstacles in his path. Hence the ball kicked by his mighty foot, instead of flying straight as might have been expected, bobbed from side to side, tripping up the players and confusing them.

Globov put all his strength into assisting Spartacus. As he strained his muscles, he saw the enemy defences weaken. He redoubled his effort, and they broke. Then, carried by the headlong rush to victory, he struck, and struck, and struck again. . . .

It occurred to him that a football match at its tensest moment had much in common with the act of love. Nothing existed except the raging need to attain the goal. At any price—let it be death itself, or anything. Only to break through, to reach. Only to score this one predestined goal. Closer, closer, quicker. . . . And now it is no longer possible to wait, impossible to delay. . . . "Please, Marina, please!"

Centre-forward Skarlygin was close to the Dynamo goal. Their goalkeeper, Ponomarenko, agile as a monkey, was impatiently dancing on his toes, ready to spring. The breathless Dynamo full-backs were hard on Skarlygin's heels. "Shoot, Skarlygin! Shoot!" groaned the stadium.

Ponomarenko rolled over and over, clutching the ball to his stomach. Skarlygin also fell but bounced up at once, lifted to his feet by the crowd's deafening roar. He could no longer stop because the goal which it had cost him so much to attain was near, and thousands wanted him to win, and there was only half a minute left before the end of play. Skarlygin struck, and struck and struck again. . . .

When the referee announced a draw, Globov was upset:

"They should sack the referee. Disallowing a goal that has been scored! It isn't right!"

"And your Skarlygin should be had up for gross infringement of the rules," the Interrogator, Skromnykh, teased him (Skromnykh was known as a Dynamo fan).

"But the ball went through the posts! Did it or didn't it?"

Both teams, breathless and covered with dust, were now leaving the field to the strains of an athletic march. Little Ponomarenko was bent double. The giant Skarlygin was limping. He was followed by boos and cat-calls from every stand in the stadium. To give some excuse for his lost victory he dragged his perfectly sound leg more pitifully still.

"I can understand Skarlygin," argued Globov, as they stood waiting for the crowd to thin out. "You can't be too fussy in the heat of the moment. You shoot and that's that. When the goal is in front of you, you don't use kid gloves. All means are fair. . . ."

He went on to draw various analogies between this and that, touching, among other things, on politics. Skromnykh listened with half an ear.

"What was that? Did you say anti-semitism in the name of internationalism or internationalism in the name of anti-semitism?" He had clearly missed the point.

When Globov began to explain he cut him off. Evidently, he would not at any price concede the superiority of Spartacus.

"All that's true enough. . . . But football isn't politics. And anyway, you know, I don't like getting too deep into abstract arguments. Theories are more in your line, you're the Prosecutor. I'm a practical man. Better tell me about that Rabinovich case. I'd like to understand it."

*

SERYOZHA went straight from the station to his Grandmother.

"You've grown a bit, and you're sunburnt."

She stretched out her hand without getting up.

"What's all this hugging! Wait—I'll finish this page." She clattered away at her typewriter.

"How was the potato harvest? So the rain put you off, did it! I don't know what's wrong

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with you children nowadays. At your age we were all in prison. Hungry? There's something for you on the window-sill, go and warm it up. Well, come on, tell me all about yourself. You can eat afterwards."

Granny was a wonder. With a few more like her, the world would not have had to wait so long for Communism. *She'd* know what to do in a kolkhoz. She'd show them!

But Ekaterina Petrovna heard him out in silence and then banged her typewriter louder than before. It rattled like a machine-gun. She bent over it and fired point-blank, without taking aim.

"There, I knew it—a mistake! Now I'll have to do it again. That's you with all your talk."

Seryozha rubbed his cheek on the back of her chair, looking over her shoulder.

"Do you have to do a whole page again, just for one mistake? Anyway, your author's no good, nobody will read him."

"What do you mean?" Ekaterina Petrovna was shocked. "You were just telling me yourself that there are still some shortcomings in certain kolkhozes. Well, here," she poked the manuscript with her finger, "it tells you all about a model farm. Electric milkers, electric ploughs. It explains all about it so that other farms can follow the example. I'll grant you, it's badly written and there's too much about love. . . ."

"I know those books, I've read them," Seryozha dismissed the book. "It's a lot of model window-dressing—all lies."

"Hush! Stop it at once."

But there was no stopping Seryozha on his downhill slope. "I know . . . I've seen with my own eyes."

She drew herself up. Except for her wrinkles, she was like a schoolgirl, slim and upright, with her cropped hair and her white collar.

"What. . . . What. . . . Have you any idea what you are saying?"

"I know. . . . I've seen. . . ." Seryozha persisted.

"You don't know anything. This is what the enemy is saying. Those who are against. . . . How dare you? How dare you?"

Granny was choking with indignation, her wispy hair, as dry as straw, flying in all directions.

"Of course I'm not against. . . . It's just life. You're like Father. It's impossible to talk to you. If Mother were still alive . . ."

He stifled a sob, and became at once a very small boy. Her own, silly, motherless boy. She wished she could sit down and have a good cry with him. But she realised that she mustn't—she must stop all this terrible nonsense—she must be strict with him.

"Stop crying. You're a grown-up man. At your age we were all sitting in prisons, fighting for the revolution."

But he was crying, his face tucked into her skirt, his fair, downy hair curling into his neck.

"Go and have a hair-cut this very day. Don't worry now, nobody thinks you're an enemy of the people. But you think you know everything; you get that from your father. What have you seen of life? Stop crying."

Surprised that he could feel his shoulders heaving, Seryozha cried all the more.

"And don't tell me I'm like your father. He and I are quite different."

"And you and I?" asked Seryozha without looking up.

He knew he should be ashamed of asking such a thing, but since he was crying like a baby anyway, he didn't care.

"You'd better not go home for the time being. There's a row going on. You can stay with me for a while."

"But are we going to get on together, Granny? I shan't give up my principles."

"Principles indeed! You think I'm old and I haven't got eyes in my head. Well, I daresay I see more things wrong than you do. But don't you understand, Seryozha, you must have faith, you simply must believe. . . . The whole of our life is devoted to this. It's—our aim. . . ."

Seryozha lay on his back and opened his eyes.

"You know, Granny," he said happily, his voice still raw, "I've come to a conclusion: there's only one thing that can help us now—a world revolution. What do you think—will there be a world revolution?"

"Well, of course there will be! How can you doubt such a thing? . . . Let me warm up something for you to eat," said Granny.

*

For want of something better, they went into the Planetarium. It occurred to Yury that it was, at any rate, cheaper and darker than a restaurant. Marina still refused to go home with him: apparently the time had not yet come.

In the vaulted ceiling overhead, the starry heavens were switched on. The universe hung above them, with its billions of stars turning slowly with a slight creak of hinges, just like

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in a real sky. It revealed its depths, tumbled out the contents, and showed for certain that there was no God.

The universe was empty, and its emptiness was so enormous that it was unimaginable, and so purposeless in its infinity that Yury felt almost as unwell as that other time, in bed.

Fortunately, this time he had Marina sitting next to him. In the darkness, she smelt of perfume more strongly than by day. Her presence assured him that he too existed. More than this, it gave some sense to the aimless glitter overhead. It reminded him of his aim, and of the need for struggle; he confessed his love to Marina, as scheduled.

He spoke all the charming nonsense current among lovers—he couldn't live without her, he was in torment, he couldn't sleep. Marina made no reply, but she held her breath expectantly, and he made up his mind to carry out the whole of his plan.

The main point was to pretend to be unhappy. Not that he counted on her pity: he staked everything on the effect of flattery, which he believed to be the surer means. Any woman would feel flattered at being the cause of suffering; and an honest woman must feel grateful and wish to show it. Thus Yury whispered how small and weak he was, humbling himself to feed her conceit, for she was to believe that he was insignificant only through her fault.

Meanwhile, the sky grew lighter as the sun rose. It was as large as a melon and it made the wretched planets run after it. The whole contraption was operated by a professor of astronomy sitting in a corner. He insisted that the earth turned round the sun and not *vice versa* as the superstitious and the ignorant believed.

The idea amused Yury. Presumably the earth thought that she was the sun. Let her. *He* knew which of them was the end and which the means, and who was the real Sun. The sun revolved round its own unique, beloved self. The sun had no purposes other than itself.

What he said was:

"Be my sun, Marina Pavlovna. Your beauty is the centre of my orbit, I revolve round it. All that is best in me is only the reflected light of your magnificence."

And so on and so forth—all about how pitiful and small he was compared with her (he!—the supreme, incomparable Yury).

"There will now be an eclipse," the professor announced in a sepulchral voice.

And what an eclipse it was! Even the professor had to admit that such an eclipse occurred, at most, once in a century. The sun vanished as if it had been swallowed.

The universe was quite dark, darker than at night because then there is a moon, but now the moon was too busy eclipsing. Only the electric stars gleamed faintly. He realised that the moment had come.

Marina kissed with clenched teeth. Suddenly, her sharp tongue flickered out, stung him twice and darted back. Again her teeth were clenched. She pushed him back. But there could be no doubt of it: here, in this celestial waste, under the extinguished sun, Marina had paid him for his flattery.

When the lights were switched on, her face was as disdainful and as calm as ever and she again refused to go to his flat.

"Why are you in such a hurry to go home?" asked Yury. "What have you to do?"

"Never you mind," she smiled mysteriously. "You are getting above yourself. Have you forgotten that the earth turns round the sun and not the sun round the earth?"

With all the lights on, the domed ceiling was low and dingy. It was difficult to understand how it could have held so much sky. There was a crowd at the exit; a sceptical old man insisted, amid general laughter, that there was a God all the same, and a boy of six was pestering his father:

"Is the earth round, Papa?"

"Yes, it is round."

"Quite round?"

"Quite round, like a globe."

"And it turns round the sun?"

"Of course it does, Misha, they've just been showing you."

"And is the sun bigger than the earth?"

"Much bigger."

"Then it's all lies," said the little boy, bursting into bitter tears.

*

THE scissors fluttered over Seryozha's head, twittering from ear to ear. He tried to keep quite still for the convenience of the barber.

It was embarrassing to have a grown-up man fiddling with your hair. He should be doing a useful job instead of wasting all his talents in a hairdressing shop. And you had to sit in front of him, like a bourgeois, not daring to breathe.

Now the nickel-plated shears were snipping at his neck. It hurt. His eyes watered but he

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couldn't wipe them: what would the man think?

All great revolutionaries hardened themselves to pain. Rakhmetov used to sleep on a bed of nails. . . .

"Head a little lower," ordered the barber.

Seryozha bent as low as he could. He wanted to be hurt still more. Let them flay him, he would not flinch. He must train his will—suppose they tortured him one day.

A razor flashed in the barber's hand. Leaning his weight on Seryozha's shoulders he trimmed the side-burns. Then he jerked himself up and flicked the towel off Seryozha.

"Anything on it?"

"Don't bother. Thank you." Seryozha blushed.

"It's only sixty kopecks extra," his tormentor pressed him, his whole proud bearing showing his contempt for the poor.

"It's not that. I just don't like the smell of eau de cologne."

To bribe his way out, he pushed five roubles into the barber's hand. His father always tipped porters and taxi-drivers.

Feeling the chill on his freshly-shaved neck, Seryozha moved towards the door through two rows of white-coated barbers. Each craftsman held a nickel-plated instrument firmly in his hand and was drily and methodically tormenting a client.

Click click click
Click click click

Mirrors reflected chins, cheeks, bald or curly heads, necks bowed, tilted, or bent back, mouths foaming with lather.

Click click click
Click click click

It was all very quiet and hygienic, nobody screamed or wept. But even the lamps in the chandelier were intolerably scented.

In the waiting-room, nervous, unshaven men waited for their turn. Absentmindedly, Seryozha opened the wrong door and stopped short. He was in the woman's section of the shop. Women were being curled and dyed. The reek of singed hair mixed with the lifeless smell of perfumed flesh.

Before him lay a woman's body wound up in a sheet. Her face was thickly coated with a pale-mauve paste; it ran as the cold fingers of the masseuse dug into it. Then the face stirred and the sticky eyelids lifted up.

"How did you get here, Seryozha? Don't be frightened. Don't you know who I am? It's me, Marina."

*

LATE at night, the Prosecutor entered the court building. The watchman let him in at once: he was devoted to the Prosecutor and respected his whims.

"Go to bed, old man," said Globov, bestowing a cigarette.

He set off down the corridor, putting on the lights as he went.

The courtroom was empty, so was the witness-box and so was the judge's chair embossed with the State emblem. But the room, so business-like, so familiar to him in its smallest details, had even more solemnity than by day.

Globov liked coming after working hours to prepare his cases on the spot. He did not think of it as a rehearsal: it was almost as if the actual, normal procedure of the court with its full complement of legal officers were taking place in the dead silence of the night.

. . . It was useless for the prisoner to deny his guilt, to try to confuse the issue and throw himself upon the mercy of the court.

"No, Citizen Rabinovich, it is not for you to plead for mercy! Better call to mind the helpless mothers whom you crippled. Think of the unhappy fathers who waited for their child in vain. Think of the children, *our children*, whom you destroyed."

The prisoner was silent, so was the judge, so was the shifty Counsel for the Defence, who looked like Karlinsky. All were silently agreeing with the Prosecutor.

While accusing Rabinovich, he kept in mind all the enemies who were hemming us in on all sides. That was why he hit the mark every time. It was but one step from illegal abortion to murder, and thence to still more dangerous acts of sabotage.

The enemy were uneasy. In the deep silence of the night they plotted, looking for a weakness, for a vulnerable spot. And now the lawyer for the defence who looked like Karlinsky stood up and publicly declared: the Prosecutor's own wife has recently had an abortion.

Marina was brought in for all to see. She was, in her disgrace, as beautiful as ever. She had a way of looking through you so that you felt like turning round—as if there was a mirror at your back and she was not talking to you but looking at herself.

Her eyes promised, drew on. But just try to

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come closer—the feathery eyelashes would come down and—always with the same passionate contempt, always with the same prepared grimace, the scalding lips would twist and utter: "Leave me alone."

"Well, why not, citizen judges, try her! Try her if you think fit! But don't forget the enemy who surrounds us from every side."

The judge, the court, were silent, and such indeed was the tomb-like silence of the place that you might have thought there was not a soul there.

Again the counsel for the enemy stood up, this time to announce: the Prosecutor's own son thinks dangerous thoughts. And now Seryozha walked into the witness-box and publicly confirmed the charge: "A noble end should be served by noble means."

"Silly boy!" shouted Globov. "Didn't I tell you where all your good intentions would get you? Your noble means lead only to defeat, and we must have victory, we must win at any cost!"

"Try him, citizen judges, if you must. Try me as well for having been so weak. Let scores, let hundreds of innocents be condemned rather than that one enemy should go free."

By the time Globov had imagined the scene in detail and weighed the arguments before his conscience, his speech was ready. As yet unwritten and not even rehearsed aloud, it had already in his mind the ring of judgment, of a sentence carried out and waiting only to be uttered. He stood up, straightened his shoulders, fixed his eyes on the State emblem on the back of the judge's chair, and spoke loudly and distinctly so that he could be heard in the farthest corner of the room:

"No Rabinoviches shall undermine the basis of our society, we shall not allow our enemies to destroy us. It is we who shall destroy them!"

Then he made a tour of the empty building, inspecting every passage, examining every corner to make sure no one was there; he climbed the stairs to the top floor and, like a careful householder, checked the doors and bolts. In this house he was the master, because in this house the accuser was himself.

And it seemed to him that down below, in the deserted hall, the ritual he had begun continued to unroll.

The Court is in session . . .
The Court is in session . . .

The words echoed from end to end of the great building. On his indictment, cases were heard, sentences were passed, men were brought in and taken out.

For who was it, after all, who had uncovered Rabinovich's plot and launched this whole series of trials?—He, Prosecutor Globov. Who had taken the place of judge and jury in a moment of crisis?—Globov. All the others did was to laugh at Rabinovich and treat him as a joke, but he—and he alone—stood up and pointed his accusing finger, ignoring witnesses and advocates. There was nothing—absolutely nothing—until he had made his accusation. This was the beginning of the whole affair.

*

GLOBOV'S inspection of the top floor had included the women's cloakroom. Such a room exists in every public building, including a city court. He had not gone in out of idle curiosity but to make sure that there was no one there. The room was empty, and only the graffiti on the walls attracted his attention. He read them, smiled, made a mental note to tell the porter to have the walls washed down, and forgot them. But I remember them.

Behind the locked door of a small, quiet cabin in a public lavatory, you are alone, free to do what you like, unseen and undisturbed. Men usually scribble obscenities. Women are better than men: they write words of love and indignation.

KOLYA, TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.—MAMA.

PETER, I HATE YOU. I'LL NEVER BE YOURS.

DEAR FEDYA, I LOVE YOU.

REMEMBER ME WHEREVER YOU ARE.

And scores of other sentences, all concerned with love and parting. Those to whom they are addressed will never know of them. They are not written to be read, but cast at random into space, to the four corners of the world, and only God, or some chance eccentric, will ever gather up these prayers and incantations.

I wish I could believe in words as do these women, and sitting in my room no bigger than a closet, at dead of night while everyone is asleep, write short straightforward words, without ulterior motive, and with no address.

In the beginning was the word. If this is true, the first word was as beautiful as the words these women write. When the first word was uttered the world came to life, and it was like a catalogue. Each thing had a label on it: "fir-tree," "mountain," "infusorium." Stars and

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planets hatched out of the worldless chaos. And each thing was called forth by its special word, and the word was act.

"Action," the Master corrects me. "Court action. Do you hear me, writer? A word can only be an accusation. An act can only be a court action."

I hear him.

The court is in session, in session throughout the world. And not only Rabinovich, unmasked by the City Prosecutor, but all of us, however many we may be, are being daily, nightly, tried and questioned. This is called history.

The door-bell rings. Surname? First name? Date of birth?

This is when you begin to write.

IV

ONLY Katya turned up at the meeting near the Zoo gate.

"Where are all the others?" asked Seryozha. "Surely they aren't frightened? They've had long enough to think it over—we agreed on it at the collective farm."

"Paramonov isn't coming. He's got a seminar on Marxism at his Institute."

She hid her frozen fingers in her sleeves.

"I can only call it plain cowardice. *You* have come, and don't tell me there weren't classes at *your* school this morning *you've* had to cut. It's just that *you* had the courage."

"So did *you*, Seryozha."

She choked a little over the warm, respectful *"you."* Everybody still said *"thou"* to her—teachers and girls at school, trolleybus and tram conductors. And now suddenly, here they were, saying "You, Katya," "You, Seryozha," as if they were in love. Seryozha insisted on it: the work in hand was dangerous and they must forget their childhood ways.

"Look, Katya," he pointed towards the Zoo. "It's like the planet Mars. They say all the vegetation there is red."

It was autumn, and the leaves had turned. The gently-swaying trees were a fantastical, unearthly red, and though Katya knew nothing about other planets, she nodded eagerly, her large spectacles glinting on her face.

"Yes, you're right. It's just like Mars."

They bought tickets at two roubles each, the price charged for adults, and went in.

Everyone else was rushing off to see the caged animals and the pond near the entrance to the Martian avenue was deserted even by the pelicans who had already made off south. Only two young men in identical light overcoats and hats were in sight. One of them was poking a twig through the railings, trying to attract the attention of the wild duck asleep on the bank. From time to time he even quacked like a duck, but his quacking was evidently unconvincing, for the wise birds did not respond.

"Sit down," said Seryozha. "It's quite safe here. I propose that we first discuss our programme."

"What will the society be called?" said Katya, and immediately suggested: "Let's think of a good high-sounding name like the *Young Guard*. What about *Free Russia*?"

"The trouble is, Katya, we know from reliable sources that there is a spy organisation abroad with a radio station, *Free Europe*. They might think we were backing them. It's essential that we should clearly dissociate ourselves from all enemies. If not, the Imperialists will seize their chance."

Seryozha got into his stride. He had taken off his cap in spite of the cold and was waving it about as he spoke with growing eloquence. A new world, Communist and radiant, unfolded before Katya.

Top wages would be paid to charwomen. Cabinet-ministers would be kept on short rations to make sure of their disinterested motives. Money, torture, and thievery would be abolished. Perfect liberty would dawn, and it would be so wonderful that no one would put anyone in jail and everybody would receive according to his needs. The slogans in the streets would be mostly by Mayakovsky; there would also be some by Seryozha, such as "BEWARE! YOU MIGHT HURT THE FEELINGS OF YOUR FELLOW MAN!" This was just as a reminder, in case people got above themselves. Those who did would be shot.

Actually, Seryozha put it very much better than this, and the only detail that remained unclear to Katya was whether the Government should be overthrown at once by force of arms, or whether it was better to wait a little, until

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other countries had done away with their capitalist systems. Seryozha proposed that they should wait for the world revolution, but admitted sadly that after that there would still have to be a *coup d'état.*

Katya asked for one more point to be included in the programme of the movement: co-education in the top forms of all secondary schools. Touching Seryozha's cap, she added diffidently:

"As we're here anyway, shall we have a look at the tiger?"

Seryozha frowned.

"I mean for the good of the cause," Katya explained, "as a cover."

"Very well," he agreed after a moment's thought, "if it's as a cover."

*

"FLEMISH masters," said Karlinsky, "painted the human body as if it were something to eat. Just look at all the cream and butter and fresh white bread that's gone into those Flemish ladies."

He watched Marina out of the corner of his eye. She was listening with an independent air as though everything he said were already perfectly well-known to her. She was doing him a favour by allowing him to take her round the gallery.

The walls around them were hung with nudes and still-lifes. The skin on splendid buttocks was slightly puckered, like tea poured into a saucer when you blow on it lightly to make it cool, or like a rotting apple when you touch the warm stains left on the pale yellow skin by other finger-marks.

In this riot of flesh, Marina was the least uncovered. Karlinsky began circuitously:

"Why do we speak of 'knowing a woman'? What has knowledge to do with love? Why was the first sin committed not under some gooseberry bush but beneath the Tree of Knowledge?"

Marina licked her upper lip. It was smooth and it tasted sweetish. Her foreign make-up bore out its promise to make the skin as smooth as parquet.

"The way of all knowledge, I suggest, is made up of two elements: connection and distinction. Isn't it true that whenever we get to know a thing, we first connect it with other things and then distinguish it as itself and different from all others? The sexual act, if you will forgive the crudity of the expression, eminently includes these first elements of knowledge. Adam and Eve were united in the embrace of love and at once knew the difference between them: which was man and which was woman. United, they became distinguished—distinguished, they became united. And having thus attained self-knowledge, they set out to know everything else."

Marina sat down in front of Rubens' "Bacchanalia," opened her bag, and took another look at herself to make sure. The round mirror was too small for her face and she had to twist and turn her neck to check up on all of it.

"Go on, Yury Mikhaylovich. We were talking about original sin. What comes next?"

"Original sin was the beginning of our knowledge of the world—man and woman, light and darkness, good and evil—until Hegel summed it all up as the union of opposites. But the basis of all human thought, its very last foundation, dear Marina Pavlovna, is the sexual act—the conjunction of two organs which are so unlike each other. The brain is only a cognitive adjunct of the sexual organs."

"That's clever," commented Marina without a smile. She gave Yury's ingenuity its due but was aware that a beautiful woman must not seem impressed, even if the theories were to be explained to her by Hegel in person.

"But what about the animals, Yury Mikhaylovich? They also propagate so to speak. . . . And yet philosophy is, for some reason, beyond them."

Karlinsky was ready for this: animals had no shame, and shame was the essence of both love and knowledge.

"Let's go and have a look at ancient Egypt, there we'll get down to the essence," he said, wiping the sweat off his forehead.

Their conversation was taking on an almost scientific character.

*

THE animals at the Zoo were already in their winter quarters where it was damp and warm as in a hot-house: the heating was on. But only the snakes, cosily curled up under glass, felt at home. The rest behaved like people at a railway station, pacing up and down, scratching themselves needlessly, waiting.

"They are waiting for freedom," Katya summed up their position. "They are longing to break out of their evil-smelling prison."

An Australian kangaroo hopped on stilted legs in a narrow passage sparsely strewn with straw. Monkeys hastily rehearsed the gestures

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of neurotic intellectuals. Crowded in their common cell, parakeets chirped away like typewriters. The elephant was in hopeless solitary confinement.

Few were left out in the autumn chill—only wolves indistinguishable from dogs, lynxes like overgrown cats, and a sheep which aroused intense curiosity. Presumably it was there for want of a wild animal to go into its cage, or perhaps to give a complete scientific picture. Certainly it would not be inside without good reason.

Katya was heart-broken for the wolves and bears. She inclined to the opinion that zoos as well as prisons would have to be abolished. But Seryozha reasoned with her: there must be victims for the sake of science, in the name of universal progress. In the future society, however, all menageries would be re-built, with light spacious cages in place of these wretched kennels, and the barbed-wire would be camouflaged as tree branches. The animals would feel almost free.

Katya listened and broke into sobs.

"And suppose they won't believe it's for their own good? Seryozha dear, I won't have it. I can't bear it if they arrest you. What shall I do if they arrest you?"

She took off her tear-stained glasses and became as helpless as all women. Comforting her was a nuisance and a delight. But that was what came of getting mixed up with a girl! Looking at tigers "as a cover"! If it were not for the struggle ahead, he would fall in love with her. . . . But Rakhmetov had suppressed all his personal feelings. So had Pavel Korchagin.

He felt sorry for himself—so good, so true, so ready to give up his life for the good of all.

When they went to look at the beasts of prey they came across the two light overcoats once again. One of them was talking to the leopard:

"What good do you think you are compared with a man, you zebra? Look at it, Tolya, wagging its tail and licking its chops. And it's all spotty. Nice to have it on a wall over your bed, a zebra like that."

The leopard looked at him with round eyes, childish with amazement. It was amazed to see this live meal wrapped in a coat and trousers, as neat as a food parcel. The leopard was presumably a new arrival and had yet to learn what was what.

The tiger was lying on its right side, asleep against the bars. Its back was striped all over, as if it bore the imprint of the bars it leaned on.

Every time the outside doors were opened, the big cats gazed fiercely round and leapt up. They fidgeted like passengers at a provincial station when a train is coming in. It was close to their feeding time.

Only the tiger remained motionless, sleeping like the dead.

*

THE Prosecutor turned over to his left side. He liked to sleep during the day, after his night's work. When it was light, his body felt relaxed, his mind alert, he found that he slept more peacefully.

Falling asleep was like sitting down before a television set which had not been properly tuned in. Shapes melted, backgrounds vanished, men with legs of cotton wool strode on floors of cotton wool. Friends and relatives in dreams had indistinguishable faces. Everything was out of focus. But you believed in everything, like a small child. Here was Marina, and Karlinsky was saying to her:

"Neither gods nor animals feel shame. Shame is our prerogative. When Adam and Eve turned from apes into human beings they were ashamed. The Fall meant Knowledge and Shame, you can't separate them."

The outline of Marina's face smudged and ran. Karlinsky had a transparent look. His hands floated in the dark air, rising and falling like two jellyfish. He melted into smiles and innuendoes.

"Shame is a taboo. We break it because it is shameful. What greater pleasure is there for a human being than to do what is forbidden? This is what makes us different from gods and beasts. . . ."

"You are a beast yourself," Globov wanted to say, but he had lost the use of his tongue. The television screen became enlarged, as if a magnifying lens had been inserted. In the foreground was a figure with a cat's paws and a woman's face.

"I prefer sphinxes," announced Marina. "They are much prettier than your bashful apes."

"You are an Egyptian sphinx yourself," squealed Karlinsky, pleased and horrified. "They ought to put you here as an exhibit."

His thin figure faded into mist. Globov stood in the Egyptian hall of the Pushkin Museum. The hall was like a zoo. Ancient peoples were so downtrodden and superstitious that they worshipped lions and rams. But their drawing was

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bad and they fitted human heads to beasts and *vice versa*.

He had no time to look at all the details. Before him, Marina, her front paws stretched out, proudly reclined on a marble pedestal.

"Puss-puss-puss," called Globov.

She crept closer. He had just time to remember: "Pity I'm asleep," and "It's a good thing Karlinsky has evaporated," when Marina miaou-ed and put her claws on his shoulders. Her face steamed like a cup of black coffee. He sipped the fragrant liquid and fell into a deep deep sleep.

*

KARLINSKY stood for a long time looking at the basalt beast. He was having difficulty with his next aphorism:

"Bestialism is punishable under the criminal code; this is meant to lessen its attraction for men."

"Who are you talking about?" Marina came out of her trance.

Finally they went to see the French school, but Yury was silent even in front of Renoir. You might as well talk midwifery as anything else with this Isis of a woman, damn her eyes. No shame and no curiosity. . . . Like an animal. . . . Or was she indeed a goddess?

"I like sphinxes too, Marina Pavlovna. Would a man who had carnal knowledge of this feline lady find out all the secrets of the universe, would you say?"

"Perhaps," said Marina, putting on the enigmatic look proper to a sphinx.

*

BEFORE Globov could open his eyes, citizen Rabinovich popped up beside him. He was serving his sentence as a guide in the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts. By what act of criminal negligence had he been appointed, wondered Globov. Rabinovich gave him to understand that he had orders from higher up to show the Prosecutor round. (The impertinence of these Jews, they're all the same!) He said that after his love-scene with the sphinx (so he'd been watching all the time, the swine!) the Prosecutor must, whether he wished it or not, acquaint himself with certain secret matters.

"But none of your mysticism."

"Very well," Rabinovich promised.

Over the sound-proof door, a quotation in luminous letters from the Master's works read: A GREAT END GIVES RISE TO GREAT ENERGY.

Beyond was an empty space and, in the middle of it, a glass jar containing a human brain preserved in spirits. It was ridged and furrowed like the crust of the earth. Its two hemispheres throbbed slowly. Around them, a pale green solution flowed through a system of fine tubes and retorts.

Rabinovich giggled:

"It still gives me a fright every time I come in."

He poked the lump of jelly with an unsteady finger. It continued to throb as though nothing had happened.

"He doesn't feel a thing. He just thinks and thinks, inventing new ideas. Perhaps he had a girl he liked somewhere, but now that he's got no legs he can't go and see her. He wouldn't get far on those ridges, would he?

"I'm very worried, Citizen Prosecutor, in case he should go mad from all this continual thinking. You know that it could mean the end of world civilisation? We're worried enough about splitting some silly atom or other, but do you realise what's going on in this very jar? A cerebral chain-reaction! Explosions of ideas, hurricanes of scattered thought! One little slip-up and the hydrogen bomb would have nothing on it. It wouldn't be just our little planet—the whole galaxy would be blown to smithereens. What I'm worried about, to tell you the truth, is God."

"The galaxy won't fall to bits. We won't let it," Globov cheered him up. "And as for God, you'd better forget him, it's the idealists who invented him. But tell me truthfully now, Rabinovich, what sort of ideas does this thing produce? This brain reaction wouldn't be turning out reactionary rubbish by any chance?"

"Most certainly not, Citizen Prosecutor!" Rabinovich was hurt. "Only great ideals and supreme purposes. All the rest, of course, is derived from them, according to the law of dialectics. There's no funny business here. Would you care to see for yourself?"

"All right, but make it quick—it's time I was waking up."

*

"I TELL you honestly, I'd say the same if it were the Last Judgment. It's not for an old Jew like me to defend the work of Christ. But for the sake of objectivity it must be said that he too had a noble aim, Citizen Prosecutor."

The former obstetrician stared up at the ceiling. His withered cheeks glowed with a lilac flush.

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"To put the Son of Man on the throne of God, to love your neighbour as yourself—that was most progressive, between you and me—for the period, I mean. But what came of it all, I ask you? What was the result? Just you listen."

A noise of hammering came from upstairs: the arms were being hammered off some Venus of Milo. This was followed by a smell of singed flesh: heretics were being burned.

"Now they'll slaughter the Huguenots," said Rabinovich eagerly.

Globov frowned:

"What savagery! To kill people of your own faith! If it were Moslems now, or idol worshippers, I could understand it—there you had grave ideological differences. But in this case there were hardly any!"

"That's how it looks to you, but they, in their ignorance, thought that perhaps the Huguenots had sold out to the devil. They couldn't allow two Christianities to exist, could they now? It would make as great a nonsense as two socialisms. Take our Tito, for example. . . ."

"Tito is a Fascist, a spy, and a lackey of the Americans!"

"Well, yes, that's what I was saying: they'd sold out to the devil."

Their discussion was interrupted by a noise of revelry.

An image of the Saviour nailed to a golden cross was borne aloft above a crowd raving in excitement as though possessed by devils. Thus they celebrated His triumph.

But already the medieval malcontents and panic-mongers were whispering: "Is this what we fought for? Treason! Degeneration! Nothing left of the great End but the means—first it justified them and now they've compromised it."

"And what was I telling you?" fidgeted Rabinovich. "Every decent End consumes itself. You kill yourself trying to reach it and by the time you get there, it's been turned inside out."

"These Jesuits of yours made a miscalculation, they slipped up."

"Nothing of the sort. They were right. Every educated person knows that the end justifies the means. You can believe it either openly or secretly, but you can't get anywhere without it. If the enemy does not surrender, he must be destroyed. Isn't that so? And since all means are good, you must choose the most effective. Don't spare God himself in the name of God. . . . And as soon as one End is done with, another bobs up on the stage of history. Look, Citizen Prosecutor! Here's another one, brand-new from the shop!"

Once again, the museum walls opened like a picture book. Painted angels fluttered painted wings.

Globov frowned: "More clerical propaganda!"

"Not at all, Citizen Prosecutor. It's all Leonardo da Vinci. Individualism. Free thought, free personality—the very same personality that replaced Christ and was gradually to establish the bourgeois way of life. But just look at it at that early stage—isn't it an end worthy of any means you care to use? Look at the beauty! The erudition!"

"I don't want to see any more," Globov turned away, suspecting a trick.

But Rabinovich went on as if he hadn't heard:

"In the name of this freedom, individuals tore out each other's guts. Look at that cut-throat competition! Now it's almost time for another End. In the name of Communism. . . ."

"Shut up! Stop that machine!"

But it was too late.

Arise, ye prisoners of starvation!
Arise, ye wretched of the earth. . . .

Ready, Aim, Fire!

V

Globov had obtained a complimentary ticket for Seryozha and they watched the military parade together.

They had a good view of the Square crowded with tanks and infantry but the main reviewing stand was a long way off and Seryozha could not see it properly.

"He's smiling," said his father who, by some miracle, always knew. Seryozha arose on tiptoe but still could not see anything except some pale blue patches ringed with gold. He thought his father must have made it up, but a large man behind them confirmed in a deep, fruity voice:

"Yes, he's smiling, and he just waved like this."

"Not like that, like this," corrected a bony woman with opera-glasses. Suddenly her voice rose to a shriek:

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"He's looking up at the sky, our bright-eyed eagle! He's looking at his fledglings!"

Bombers were flying past in close formation, and such was the grandeur of their compact, unwavering flight that you felt like rolling over on your back like a puppy to show your admiration and humility. But they were too preoccupied with their lofty, all-absorbing task to waste time on trifles and gloat over you as they pinned you down to earth. Ramming the air, they moved on to their target (Lord alone knew where it was), a target to which Seryozha, as he realised at once, was totally irrelevant; indeed the whole square could not be more to them than a passing landmark from which they took their bearings.

His father shook his shoulder.

"You're looking the wrong way. Look to your left, further to your left, look! He's waving to the crowd!"

"Our darling! Our joy!" groaned the bony woman, craning her neck to her left. She looked as if she might foam at the mouth at any moment and Seryozha felt embarrassed by his own indifference. To his shame, he still could not make out, among the blobs on the grandstand, the One whose proud name intoxicated all the rest like wine.

His name was spoken in hushed voices in the crowd and bellowed out by the loudspeakers. His portraits, varying in size but otherwise much alike, were floating across the square like sailing ships. As they passed before him and walked on, the marchers, instead of looking where they were going, twisted their whole bodies round to get one last glance at him from afar.

And yet, so it seemed to Seryozha, HE was HIMSELF in some strange way absent. Everything spoke of HIS presence, but somehow HE was just not there.

"Have you seen him yet?" insisted Globov. "Are you blind, or short-sighted?"

Seryozha made a despairing effort, picked out one blue patch a little apart from the rest and, in his mind, added the missing face.

"Now I see," he said, and, taking courage, asked: "He's smiling and nodding and waving his hand, is that right?"

"Yes, that's him. That's the Master."

*

YURY stayed away from the parade. He said he was ill and spent the morning tuning in to jazz. His wireless set was German. He could even get the B.B.C. He enjoyed hopping up and down the scale from station to station all over the world.

Arab wailing took the place of a French commercial. And here were two programmes incongruously tangled up: a service relayed from a Scandinavian church, and an account, in a rich Ukrainian contralto washed with disinfectant, of the achievements of the distinguished lathe-turner Nalivayka who had fulfilled his year's plan in time for the Anniversary.

Yury's fingers throbbed. They vibrated with the ether. Sound-waves looped and looped about his neck. And echoing in his belly and his hollow chest, the black magnetic sky hummed and shuddered, riddled now and then with morse-like tracer bullets.

Yury was an aerial. But he wanted to be a transmitter emitting powerful waves of any length he chose. "Hello! Hello! Karlinsky calling! Listen to me and to me alone!"

The stations, each about its own affairs, were shouting one another down. They surrounded him like market-women. He spun round, twiddling the knob, turning to each in turn almost without a pause.

He hummed psalms; his feet under the table tapped to a Brazilian samba. But what had *he* to offer to the world in his own name? Some pot-pourri of Freud and a Hawaiian guitar? Who and where was he, the one and only Yury, if the time had come for everyone to speak?

Finally he found the wavelength of Radio Free Europe. Very confidentially—he must have been a little frightened himself—the announcer promised something spicy in honour of the October celebration, and passed the microphone to a former lieutenant-colonel of the air-force, turned grey with bitterness and hardship in the Soviet service. But his other-worldly voice got no further than "My dear brothers and sis . . ." when it was interrupted by an angry roar. Our jammers were in action. The rattle of machine-guns and artillery, loud enough to split the ear-drums, swept American jazz, Paris commercials, and Radio Free Europe and wiped them out. The battle was engaged on boundless electronic fields.

Yury skipped across no-man's-land, and drew breath. The gunfire was dying down and giving way to parade-ground music and shouts of hurrah. The first unit of the marchers was passing the main tribune.

This was the last straw. He switched off, wrenching the knob as if he were wringing the

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neck of a netted bird. He even fancied he heard the crunch of bones.

*

THE Prosecutor always called Ekaterina Petrovna "Mother." Though what sort of a mother was she? She was hardly even his mother-in-law now; since his second marriage they scarcely ever met. All the same he made it a rule to call on her on each of the two holidays: November 7th and May 1st.

"Mother" laughed at him—"Well, Prosecutor, so you found nothing better to do? Drunk a toast to the Revolution yet?"—and gave him tea as thick as strong red wine.

A map of Korea dotted with flags hung on the wall. At the time of Seryozha's birth it had been a map of Spain. Tiny crimson rags on pins followed the line of the front. The old lady, faithful to her habits, moved them accurately every morning.

Globov yawned, expanding his resilient bemedalled chest, and his chair creaked.

"That's really quite a paunch you've got now," said Ekaterina Petrovna. "You'll soon be a cabinet-minister at this rate. Why doesn't your new wife do something about it? Don't get cross, I'm only joking! Well, how are things at home? Out with it. Still fighting, the two of you?"

She could not be deceived.

"*Things are not too good.*"

His peasant jaws and cheek-bones, lean and angry, showed suddenly under the fatty tissues of his face.

"You know how it is, Mother, I was born and bred among people with healthy bodies and healthy minds. All this hocus-pocus, fancy intellectual stuff—it's not my line. Sometimes we don't talk for weeks on end, we even have our meals apart. It's as if I were not her husband but some sort of an adjunct to her, a means to an end. . . . I'm a plain man, and I've got far, but I've come up the hard way."

"Now don't you start boasting. You've got nothing to boast about."

"With these two hands I've ploughed the soil, and I've sent people to their deaths. . . ."

He pushed his fists, like two tanks, to the middle of the table. Here, just short of the sugar basin, they stopped, turned, fell over with a rustling of cloth and ringing of crockery, and lay flat, their meaty bellies up. Globov complained of his troubles.

With his blood-pressure he needed perfect quiet. But how could he keep calm, with all this mess at home, and living on his nerves at the office, and the international situation not being exactly as peaceful as a health resort?

In strict confidence he told her that spy-centres had been uncovered in X-garia and Y-akia. A group of criminals in the Z Regional Party Committee had been plotting to seize power. The enemy, whose insolence now exceeded all bounds, was trying to spread panic and wild rumours were going round the city—each more fantastic than the other—for instance, that cancer germs concealed in matches had been infiltrated into the country by a foreign power (you pick your teeth with a match and you're done for), or that, under the influence of cosmic rays, women were only giving birth to girls (to the detriment of our army).

The Prosecutor's ears were flushed with blood as thick and dark as oil. His neck bulged over his collar. It was time, my goodness, it was high time for a good blood-letting, for a sensational public trial to clear the air!

The old lady wrapped herself in her moth-eaten shawl, as if she were chilly, and told a story about some people she had known in prehistoric times:

"Yes, it happens. . . . Konstantin Pluzhnikov —who would ever have believed it—spying for the Japanese! But afterwards it all came back to me—that same Pluzhnikov was hobnobbing with the Mensheviks as far back as Geneva. . . . Sometimes, of course, there are mistakes, and innocent people suffer. . . ."

"Do you know what happens, Mother, when tanks go into attack?" asked Globov hoarsely, and stood up. "Whatever's in their way, they crush it. Sometimes even their own wounded. A tank just can't turn aside. If it went out of its way for every wounded man it would be shot to pieces by anti-tank guns blazing at it point-blank. It just has to crush and crush!"

The Prosecutor stood, his unhealthy face grave and sad. Ekaterina Petrovna couldn't help getting up too.

"You don't have to teach me my ABC's, Volodya. Our aim justifies any sacrifice. But nothing else would justify it, you see that? Nothing else."

She reached up with an old woman's stiffness and kissed his purple blown-out cheek—as if she were indeed his mother, his own illiterate long-forgotten mother who had once made the sign of the cross over him to bless him on his way as he left the village.

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Already in his galoshes, on his way out, the Prosecutor stopped in front of the map on the wall. The tiny red rags hung from their pins, dusty, and evidently long untouched: there had been no change on the Korean front.

*

"But it's Trotskyism, pure Trotskyism!" Karlinsky was delighted with his discovery. It went far beyond his hopes. And these children had actually formed a group—a society of boys and girls playing at world revolution!

While he read the notebook she had brought him, Katya looked around the room. She felt oppressed by the amount of furniture which had been squeezed in between the walls plastered with books and pictures. There was even a real ikon—not in the corner where a believer would have put it but, as befitted a cultured man, over the wireless set, next to a Japanese engraving.

"I am glad of this chance to get to know you better, Ekaterina . . . sorry, I don't know your patronymic. . . ."

She could hardly remember it herself. So little worn, it embarrassed her like a new dress which attracts attention.

"Let us be frank, Ekaterina Grigoryevna. Our friend is on a slippery path. Tell him so when you hand this treatise back to him."

"You mean Seryozha . . . Vladimirovich?"

These girls with glasses, and wrist-bones too big for them and breasts too small! And this first secret love, on an ideological basis! What more suitable for a psychological experiment? Perhaps something on the lines of an old-fashioned drama—a struggle between sentiment and duty.

He gazed fondly at a china group which nestled on the what-not: a nymph eluding the embrace of a goat-legged satyr; her hands gave cover to her front but left her equally attractive back-view unprotected. Karlinsky stroked her small bluish back with his cigarette.

"Revolution, party-maximalism, democracy in peasant shirt-sleeves, vintage of the '20s," he waved the notebook. "The Trotskyists argued along much the same lines. . . ."

Katya was shocked. What did enemies of the people, spies, and saboteurs have to do with it? Such men had to be destroyed, mercilessly, as was being done by Beria. But Seryozha's organisation, so far nameless, existed for the struggle for freedom and for a genuinely Soviet régime. She shuddered with disgust as a newspaper cartoon came into her mind: Trotsky, or Tito, or some such mercenary killer, pictured as a long-tailed rat and surrounded by his hangers-on, sat enthroned upon a hill of human bones.

Yury did not, however, go into the details of Trotskyism. He had a more amusing task on hand. He, the life-long counsel for the defence of thieves and speculators, would now defend the world's foremost power.

Jerking himself up from the sofa, he adopted the melancholy pose appropriate to the defence in a difficult case. Murderers, embezzlers, corruptors of children, all needed the benefit of pathos and rhetorical gestures. Pick-pockets and drunken brawlers were a different matter; there, a joke or two did no harm. But a major criminal had a right to sympathy, and his conscience, outraged by the law, was represented by counsel.

"If I didn't know our dear Seryozha personally, if I were not his father's friend, and if I had not met you—I would . . . I would. . . ."

Karlinsky's long thin shadow leaped among the Japanese prints, clasped its hands, climbed the ceiling, arguing, refuting.

"How can you admit . . . Everybody knows . . . Either/or . . . Never mind about . . . Marxism, nihilism, cynicism . . . Action, fraction . . . Left deviation, right deviation . . . Essentially . . . Necessary sacrifices . . . Glorious aim . . . In the name of our . . . Aim, aim aim . . ."

"A noble end ought to be served by noble means," Katya protested weakly.

Karlinsky lost his temper. Count on a goody-goody who doesn't know where babies come from to fancy herself as a Sophia Perovskaya!

"Noble means? Just wait and see what will happen to you and your noble means. . . . If you were in power, you would yourself. . . . Suppose I took it into my head to become an emperor . . . or even to blow up the Pushkin Monument on the Tverskoy Boulevard . . . would you pat me on the back for that? And what difference will it make to me which crowd puts me behind bars? You reformers! I suppose you'd like to see a kindly socialism, a free form of slavery. . . ?"

Checking himself in the nick of time, he switched back to more current forms of speech:

"Objectively speaking . . . the logic of the struggle . . . the wheel of history . . . He who is not with us . . . Encirclement . . . Socialism in one country . . . In essence . . . Speaking objectively . . ."

Katya sat in dejected silence.

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"Counter . . . xism . . . ism, ism, ism . . .
"Principle . . . inciple . . .
"Jective . . .
"Manity . . . lution . . . *Pferd* . . ."
Katya was crushed.

Hadn't Seryozha warned her that they must be careful not to let the Imperialists exploit them—they always seized their chance—and now they had. Spies and sharks, gangsters and samurai, coiled like dragons, bloated like frogs, grinning from posters, caricatures and evil Japanese prints, the enemy reached out, encircled, spread his net. Who had let him in? Was it Karlinsky, who had proved it all as clearly as that twice two makes four, or Seryozha who had sent her to consult this character about his petty-bourgeois programme? Or was it she, herself—not meaning to, of course, speaking objectively, and yet, objectively speaking, hadn't she opened the door, showed tendencies, failed to oppose . . .

"And you'd better liquidate that notebook . . ." Yury Mikhaylovich called after her. "And think it over at your leisure which is dearer to you . . . in the name of . . . necessary victims. . . . Wait! Ekaterina Grigoryevna! . . ."

He came out on the landing and listened to the clicking of her heels as it grew fainter in the echoing darkness of the hall. The girl had guts. But perhaps in future the prosecutor's son and heir would be more careful. Perhaps he would refrain from risky games which could only implicate people who remained free—free to think original thoughts.

He hung his head over the banisters and spat into the stair-well. For a long time there was no answering sound. The dark, stony precipice at his feet made him giddy. But so distinctly did the moist echo reach him in the end that he spat again.

*

Globov refused vodka: he had a bad heart. As the guest of honour, he was not obliged to drink. Sipping, out of politeness, a glass of fizzy mineral water, he alone in all that gay, exclusively male company, kept a clear head.

The Interrogator, Skromnykh, took him aside. Covered by the clink of knives and glasses, their conversation was inaudible to curious ears (should there be any) and became intimate.

"Your Rabinovich case has come my way. He's been turned over to us. I'll say you've got a good eye, Vladimir Petrovich. You're a real sniper! A Robin Hood! A Till Eulenspiegel."

Throwing a stealthy look over his shoulder, Skromnykh almost nuzzled the Prosecutor's neck.

"Remember what you hinted at . . . as far back as September? I guessed what you were getting at at once. And now we've dug a little deeper, between you and me, we've got a case to make your mouth water."

"You don't mean to say it's political?"

"You like to have your little joke, Vladimir Petrovich. As if you didn't know. . . . It was your notes that put us on the track. . . . And needless to say, he's not the only one. . . . It's on a country-wide scale, my dear fellow. . . . Medicine! Doctors! . . . See what I mean? And all . . . you know—these chaps with long noses . . . cosmopolitans! Every one. . . ."

He bustled back to the dinner-table, encouraging his guests like a hospitable housewife: "Eat, boys, fill your plates, don't be shy. It's a stag party, so you have to help yourselves."

Globov found he was enjoying himself and decided to stay late. He liked these people; they were Skromnykh's colleagues, every one with a face like an open book, a past as clear as glass, and a stainless conscience. Kindly men of whom perhaps half the world was terrified.

Among them were people with special talents: a champion diver, a singer good enough for the opera, a professional whistler. Globov was the only guest in uniform; all the rest were in plain clothes, yet he knew that there were several captains in the room, a few majors, and even two lieutenant-colonels. It was a dread invisible army sitting round the festive table.

They talked about their children, about football, about their summer holidays. Some liked to take their leave in Kislovodsk, others definitely preferred the Crimean seaside. One of the two lieutenant-colonels (the whistling virtuoso) announced that he was buying a car, a *Victory*:

"I've got to pay for it in two days' time, but I still can't make up my mind about the colour —beige or grey."

An argument broke out. Beige was smarter, insisted Skromnykh. Others objected that a beige *Victory* was common.

Globov was delighted by the absence of formality. No shop talk, no political-ideological showing-off, such as was usual among colleagues in other branches. These, outwardly, were the most easy-going of men; their politics were all inside them, deep in their heart, hidden in that

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secret place where other mortals keep their vices.

How deluded was the mercenary Western Press whose scribblers portrayed these men as sombre villains. In reality, they couldn't be nicer; they were witty, home-loving; according to Skromnykh, many of them liked fishing in their spare time, or cooking, or making toys for children. One senior interrogator, employed on cases of the utmost gravity, used his leisure for knitting gloves and embroidering doilies and cushion-covers; he asserted that needlework was good for the nervous system. But let nobody believe for a moment that if the need arose . . .

Guns fired a salute in the street outside; it was as if a huge bottle had blown its cork. This time Globov had to drink down his champagne, but he allowed himself only one glass.

"A toast. . . . He whose inspired genius . . . undeviating advance . . . into action! . . . from victory to victory!"

The table was like a battlefield: wine dribbling like blood, pies squelchy like a military road on a wet autumn day; splintered skeletons of herrings; ash and cigarette butts; red and rusty stains.

The more they drank, the less they talked. Other people in their cups shouted and brawled, but these, with every glass and every bottle, sank deeper into immobility and silence. It actually seemed to Globov that with every gulp they took they only sobered up. Fixed owlish eyes observed, ears listened.

One young man, probably only a lieutenant, burst out:

"I went to see *The Fall of Berlin* at the Metropole last night."

Drawn as by a magnet, necks and ears stretched towards him from all sides and froze expectantly.

The speaker gave a frightened squeal: "I enjoyed it very much . . . I really do recommend it." And quickly stuffed his mouth with a sardine.

The silence was complete. They no longer even clinked their glasses. Silently they drank, silently they ate. And as silently they would die, if need be.

The Interrogator Skromnykh could only just sit upright in his chair.

"Who was it you asked about, Vladimir Petrovich? What Rabinovich? Never heard of him. What's that? *I* told you? You must have been dreaming!"

His eyes, criss-crossed with small red veins, were glazed in genuine astonishment.

"There's vigilant drinking for you," Globov winked. He expected the whole unit to leap up at his words, stand at attention, and grunt: "Thank you, sir," in a hoarse whisper. But they were all drunk, and all as dumb as the fish which they were eating.

*

To cover up her tracks, Katya went on foot. She carried the notebook in her sleeve. Sheet by sheet, she tore it up into small scraps, rolled them in her fingers, and dropped them in the street.

She was being followed. Who was following her, she could not find out, however often she looked back. There were too many people about. The crowds poured down the road, strolling out for the evening, looking at the holiday illuminations.

To-night the city was like the model of the human circulatory system which had been explained to her at school. A human being sawn in half and picked clean, down to the last capillary vein, is seen to be made up of a great number of many-branched blood vessels varying in thickness and in colour. The city had even more of them than the human body, and they had been stripped down for the evening's entertainment. Along the blazing arteries from one end of the town to the other, congealed blood dripped in dotted lines.

Katya stopped in front of Seryozha's house and crossed the road. The two windows of his room were dark, like tombs. She crossed her fingers to ward off ill-luck.

But it was too late. The blow had already fallen. While she was running down the stairs, Karlinsky must have picked up his receiver, made a call, and the light behind Seryozha's windows had gone out. Or perhaps Karlinsky hadn't made the call, and Seryozha had simply forgotten about poor Katya and was peacefully asleep? Or he might be out with his friends, discussing Trotskyist plans? It made no difference, she could do nothing for him. And it was her own fault. She had scattered the scraps and left them like a paper-trail to lead the way.

Far behind her, the hunt was already on. They were sweeping the pavement, looking under galoshes, draining puddles, bending busily to their task.

By to-morrow, all the scraps would be collected, ironed out, and pasted together. And all twenty-four lined pages, as indestructible as a hydra, whose heads grow again as fast as they are cut off, would be there in their blue

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binding; and there would be Seryozha's petty bourgeois plan, scrawled all over them in his tiny writing. There to be seen. There to be judged. There before the terrible, the just tribunal.

The earth shook. Steel pipes reared into the upturned sky. This was the aorta of the city, bursting somewhere behind the Universal Stores. They should put on a tourniquet, but it was too late. Other vessels had already burst, fountains of multi-coloured blood splashed into the sky.

Katya walked home to the thunder of saluting guns. She did not look up, she did not count the volleys. Every shot seemed to her to be the last. At any moment, the veins and arteries would run dry and the huge disabled heart would stop. But it thumped and thumped, shaking the asphalt at her feet and lighting up the faces of the passers-by with a glow which turned from pink to green.

Katya decided that if it banged five times she would go to the headmaster, or to the regional party committee, or still higher. She would do it the very next day. Without telling him, she would save Seryozha, she would undo the snare set by the spies, she would explain that there had been a mistake, that Karlinsky had told a lot of lies, and that all that mattered was the common good.

After the fourth bang, Katya still hoped there would be no more. But the heart stopped beating only after the fifth. And suddenly it was so still that she wished that she were in bed and crying her eyes out. After all, she had a right to cry. This was the one right nobody could take away.

*

Late at night, after the lights had been put out and people, tired out by the holiday, had fallen fast asleep, two plain-clothes men came out into the empty streets. Strolling about their allotted district they dreamed dreams and conversed in low voices, heart to heart. One was called Vitya, the other Tolya. It is not given to us to know more than this.

"Look, Vitya," said Tolya, "isn't it time the sewage system was made to do some real work? Think of all the secret material that gets flushed away without the least control! Plans, surveys, love-letters, first drafts of literary works, and sometimes even finished copies!

"They say the writer Gogol, who lived in the 19th century, burnt a book of his in his stove. *Dead Scowls* I think it was. And to this very day, nobody knows what was in it.

"Well, nowadays, there's central-heating so nobody can burn anything. Nowadays, they all try to tear their secrets up into little bits and flush them down the drain, so as to remain incognito. That's what we must look after.

"Couldn't we, for instance, put a special drag-net, or a sieve, underneath each house and give the janitor strict instructions to extract all papers that have writing on them. Genuine impurities —toilet-paper, newspapers, those could be left alone—leave them free to go anywhere they like. What do you think of that, Vitya? Isn't it an idea?"

Vitya remained silent, looking round him thoughtfully at the deserted neighbourhood. Finally he said gently:

"It isn't scientific to dig up every bit of dirt. Frankly speaking, I'm not interested in Gogol. I'm interested in another writer called H. G. Wells. Have you read the *War of the Worlds* or the *Invisible Man*?"

"No, I haven't," Tolya owned up sadly.

"Well, I know his *Time Machine* almost off by heart. . . . But what I'm interested in is another discovery. Also out of science-fiction. It's an apparatus called a psychoscope. Rather like your drag-net but it's still more thorough. It's to know what people think about and feel. So that even those who don't say anything and who don't put down their thoughts in writing should be subject automatically to control. At any hour and at any distance. What do you think of that?"

"What did you say it was called, Vitya?"

"A psychoscope."

"Yes. It makes you think."

Both fell silent and dreamed their dreams. But they dreamed in concord. They dreamed about the same thing—

In our age, the age of television and of radar, the epoch of atomic energy applied for peaceful purposes, it would be excellent to have a psychoscope in every district. Say, for example, that I'm a harmful element and I'm sitting in my under-populated flat, knowing in advance that every one of my ideologically negative thoughts, each and every criminal plan I make, is projected on a screen at the District Psychoscopic Centre, just like at the cinema! I try, of course, to think of nothing. I see to it that all my thoughts are innocent—about drink, or women, or even about how to work for the good of the people. But all the time I'm simply itching with

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criminal thoughts. I turn and twist in my chair, I do problems in arithmetic to keep my mind busy.

Nothing doing! Before I know where I am, an evil thought has popped into my head. For instance, how might I learn to think invisibly? I fight it off with everything I have—geometry, differential calculus, Old-Slavonic verbs. I recite Lermontov's poem, *I Walk Out on the Road*, four times running. But that filthy thought creeps back, and now there's another with it: how can I start another revolution? And at that point they've got you.

"Good-morning, citizen. What was that you were mulling over 4 minutes and 17 seconds ago? All is known to us. If you don't believe it, we'll show you the film."

"I can't deny it. I am guilty. I am the contemptible hireling of a certain foreign power. Ever since my childhood I've been thinking of restoring capitalism and blowing up railway bridges."

Silence! Two men in plain clothes stroll through the city. Two men in plain clothes. Slowly, decorously, they advance along the sleeping streets, peering into lifeless windows, gateways, doors. There's nobody. One is named Vitya, the other Tolya. And I am frightened.

VI

EVERY day, in spite of the winter frost, Ekaterina Petrovna, wearing felt boots and a cap with ear flaps, called at the Prosecutor's office for news. Her frequent visits were tactless, but Globov could not make up his mind to tell her so straight out. Since Seryozha's arrest the old woman had become quite impossible. She found faults and nagged more than ever before. And each time she came, Globov's secretary announced with a respectful smirk on his face:

"That elderly person is here again, sir. The one in felt boots. Shall I show her in?"

Now, as usual, Globov's former mother-in-law was pacing up and down his room and grumbling:

"It's not possible. I don't believe any of it. He's neither a spy nor a saboteur."

And again Globov tried:

"Did they find any criminal evidence when they searched his things?"

"Nothing, nothing at all."

Ekaterina Petrovna's boots left dirty puddles spreading on the parquet. After she had gone, Globov locked his door and wiped the floor with his own hands, using a rag he had brought from home and kept under the cupboard.

Then he dialled Skromnykh's number and said:

"Globov here. Any news?"

Skromnykh said drily: "Nothing so far," and hung up. This happened every day.

*

EVERY day when he came home from the office, Yury washed his hands and this gave him pleasure. It always pleased him to see dirty, soapy water: the dirtier it was as it ran into the plug-hole the more pleasure it gave him. He thought that something similar must be experienced in confession.

If Marina came, he would touch her face with clean fingers. He would touch her lips. He soaped his hands again on the chance that she might come to-day.

In the past few months his every gesture had been calculated. As he approached it, the distant goal absorbed him utterly. He lived only to possess Marina. He even ate and slept with an ulterior motive: to keep up his strength for his meeting with her. He brushed his teeth as if in preparation for a kiss. And now day followed day only to give her time to miss him and, after a decent interval, to give in.

Someone knocked. He waited for his knees to stop shaking and flung the door open.

It was not Marina. The woman from next door tried to push her way in as she handed him a letter and said in a voluptuous whisper:

"A girl left this for you. A very young girl. Like a budding rose."

Marina would be flattered: he must tell her. He slit the envelope.

"Comrade Karlinsky,

"You have treacherously denounced Seryozha. He is not a Trotskyist, he's an honest revolutionary, unlike you who are a coward and a rat."

Yury turned the note this way and that, looked again inside the envelope and, finding nothing else, put it aside for his collection. At a suitable moment he would tell Marina: it would make her laugh.

Then he washed his hands, like Pontius Pilate.

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He did not wish to be reminded of Katya and Seryozha. Probably Pontius Pilate did not give much thought to Jesus Christ when he went to wash. He, too, may have had a purpose unknown to the Evangelists.

After he had dried his hands, finger by finger: he turned to face the door and stamped his foot.

"Well, what are you waiting for, Marina Pavlovna? I'm expecting you. I'm ready."

*

THE Interrogator was embroidering a tea-cloth. The elaborate design had been carefully chosen: ingeniously twisting tulips on a black ground. . . .

Every time Seryozha was brought in, he gathered up the silk skeins scattered on the desk, rolled up his needlework, locked it in his safe, and opened a friendly conversation. So far all had been going well.

"Yes, that's a most intelligent observation. It cannot be denied. The people at the top take a lively interest in such opinions. . . . And how about collective farms, what should be done about them? That's another of those things. . . . As you know. . . ."

Listening to Seryozha's views on collective farms, he sighed dejectedly. Sometimes he argued, sometimes he agreed; and so they made progress.

"And then, frankly, you know, the Press . . ."

Seryozha was quite ready to contribute his own ideas on the Press as well, and was only puzzled why he had not yet been released.

"Well, young man," the Interrogator said at last. "Now we have been into your views in detail. One thing I'd like to get straight—how did you manage to get in touch with foreign agents?"

His expression was altogether kindly and encouraging, as much as to say: "Don't be shy. Come out with it. We all understand. As if it mattered!"

"What kind of an idiotic joke is that?" Seryozha paled. "Please remember, I have not so far been condemned. I am only on trial."

The Interrogator looked amused and drew the curtain back. The daylight was so clean and so transparent that you felt like taking a deep breath of it.

"Come here. Do you hear? It's you I'm talking to."

Now he's going to strike me, thought Seryozha, his face stiffening.

"Look through the window."

Seryozha saw the square which he had often crossed in the old days, tiny people diving through the entrance to the underground, others travelling in midget cars and trolley-buses, all free to go where they pleased. Snow, real snow, was coming down on them out of the sky.

"That's where they are, the people who are on trial. See how many of them there are?"

The Interrogator pointed at the crowds milling below. Then he stroked Seryozha's shorn head and explained gently:

"You're different now, my boy. You're not on trial, you're condemned."

*

IT WAS useless to make a fuss. Globov had already had a hint from high up:

"Better keep right out of it. You needn't worry. Nobody distrusts you. But we don't advise you to intervene on his behalf. You can't touch pitch without getting tarred. Better forget him. Get your wife to have another while you can. As for this one—he's no son of yours any more."

But Granny would not keep quiet:

"You must insist! You must go on trying! Is he your son or isn't he?"

His son! Other people's children were—just children. They graduated. They went in for law. It was true that Skromnykh's boy had been in trouble, but that was only for theft. His father gave him a hiding to teach him a lesson and that was that. But this! Straight from school to prison! Dishonouring his father's name! And at such a time!

"No, Mother," said Globov, his eyes on her wet felt boots. "There's a big round-up going on. I can't. . . .

"What did you say? Afraid? Have I ever been afraid of anyone? They were all afraid of me. . . . No, but I am a prosecutor and my conscience won't let me. Think of all the people, every day, who are even less guilty and whom I have to. . . .

"What future? Whose heirs? Mine? I'll manage without. No traitor can be a son of mine.

"What nonsense! Really, what has the word of honour of a woman-revolutionary to do with it? It sounds a bit old-fashioned, Ekaterina Petrovna. And we have certain information. . . .

"Oh, no! You're wrong there! It's no joke to lose a son. . . .

"That's enough! What about yourself? . . . What about your brother, your own brother,

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do you happen to remember? He skipped off abroad. I suppose you . . .

"It didn't surprise me. I had an idea. . . . But if I'd known to what lengths. . . .

"Have you gone clean out of your mind, you crazy old woman? I did *not* denounce him. Do you hear? I did *not*.

"Leave me alone. Stop clutching at me. Will you keep your hands to yourself. . . .

"I told you who gave him away. A girl who belonged to his own group. One of the teachers told me. The fellow who teaches history. She went to the headmaster . . . as if to ask his advice. . . . He wanted to hush it up, but . . .

"But it was a girl, I tell you. Don't you understand plain Russian? A school-girl.

"Well, you know, that's going a bit too far. I've never yet strangled any little girls or little boys. But when it comes to enemies, of course, that's another matter. . . .

"Shut up, you old witch, before you are put away yourself! After this I never want to. . . .

"Very good, and what then? So you did look after me for twenty-five years? I've had quite enough of your bullying.

"You needn't. I'll be very glad if you never come again."

After the old woman had gone, he waited a few moments to get his breath. Then he called for his secretary, and said in the off-hand tone used for outsiders:

"Send the cleaner in, tell her to wipe the floor. That citizeness made such a mess with her felt boots, the place is like a pig-sty."

*

THE telephone bell rang. Marina put down her cards (she had been getting out a complicated patience), but did not lift the receiver. Bending over the telephone, she listened curiously to its long-drawn-out peals.

Suddenly it seemed to her that the receiver quivered: at any moment now it would jump off its horned stand and Karlinsky's angry voice would twang at her from the table-top.

"So you're hiding, are you? You don't care to come along—well, it's all off as far as I'm concerned!"

The possibility seemed so real that she left the room and went on listening next door, invisible and safe.

"How he's suffering, poor man, how much he needs me!" she thought triumphantly, pleasantly starting at each new peal.

For three months Yury had been threatening to leave her. Either she must give in or they must part. When she protested that she wished neither, he gave her a fortnight "to get over her whims," and kept away, pestering her with his scenes and terrifying her with the thought of loneliness. The fortnight was nearly over.

The telephone, after giving her a headache, had stopped in dudgeon, and Marina went back to her sofa, her hesitations, and her cards. The two were connected. The cards predicted tears, letters, distant assignments and government flats; two unidentified jacks promised an agreeably busy time, but the kings evaded her, one after the other.

Marina did not believe in cards, but it was true that recently her husband had seemed absent. He had stopped boring her with talks on family life and on the mutual understanding essential between wives and husbands. He vanished for whole evenings on end and seemed to have forgotten that, although they had quarrelled, they were still sharing the same roof.

To make things worse, Seryozha had been picked up, and from that day on, not a man of her acquaintance had been near her. Even Skromnykh kept away.

The king of spades was the only one left. She couldn't simply let him go. Who else showed such royal generosity in his understanding of her beauty? And what was beauty without scenes and declarations of love?

"You are my goal, my god," Yury often said, arguing with characteristic erudition that a lofty end had need of means, however humble and unworthy, and that God, who unfortunately did not exist, would be very lonely if he hadn't thought of creating man to worship him and to serve him in other ways.

Yes, it was true. Wasn't a woman the loneliest being in the world? Was there any loneliness more bitter?

The front door banged and Globov's noisy footsteps sounded in the hall.

"You're in!" he said in a surprised voice when Marina called out to him. "I wanted some money, I was going to send a messenger across, but my secretary tried to ring you up—she rang and rang for about ten minutes but there was no reply."

"I was asleep," she lied automatically and thoughtlessly, for her husband knew how lightly she slept. It would have been more convincing to say that she had been out for a walk or shopping. But Globov said nothing and, instead of stopping at her door as had been his habit,

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marched straight past it. The key clicked in the door of his study: he had locked himself in.

It was then that she realised that Karlinsky would not ring her up, neither to-day nor to-morrow. Perhaps he no longer expected her to come. Perhaps he no longer even wished her to make the disgusting surrender on which he had insisted.

She went up to her mirror and seeing her injured face, which looked older day by day, she almost burst into tears, but she remembered in the nick of time that she must not: crying gives you wrinkles.

*

THAT night Globov got drunk. Though in fact neither the cognac nor the vodka went to his head: he only felt such tenderness in his heart that he began to walk up and down his room softly singing a lullaby.

Hush-a-bye, baby,
I'll sing you a song.

These were the only words.

There was no harm in it. No one heard him, no one saw him. He was alone.

His arms, folded on his breast, hugged and carried him. Globov loved his large awkward trunk and he was rocking it to sleep. He felt cosy with it, familiar as it was and long unwashed. Snug in his shirt, it gurgled gratefully, swaying to the tune.

Hush-a-bye, baby,
I'll sing you a song.
I'll sing you a song.
I'll sing you a song.

It could go on and on, perhaps even forever.

And now there seemed to be a little girl in his arms—it was his small, unborn daughter.

Sleep my darling, sleep my baby, he urged her, patting the small warm back. There's nobody for you to play with, that's the trouble. Seryozha isn't at home. He's let us down, he's left us. He's a stranger to us, our Seryozha. He's a bad boy.

To get her off to sleep quicker Globov began to sing all the songs he knew to the same lullaby tune. For some reason, they were all war songs, and he frequently got out of tune and gave his rocking too soldierly a swing.

He was interrupted. Marina's voice rose shrilly in the corridor. He put the baby down on the sofa, tucked it up in his tunic, hid the bottles under the table, and unlocked the door.

Marina understood at a glance. But to stay in the bedroom by herself was still more frightening.

"Let me come in, Volodya. I can't sleep. I'm frightened by myself without you." Her teeth chattered with cold and humiliation. But he stood before her, dishevelled, dressed in nothing but his vest and pants, his huge spreading body barring her way.

Marina called him pussycat and popsy. (How could he be a popsy or a pussycat? He was a prosecutor.) She begged him to let her lie down on the sofa (so she was already on to it!) and promised not to scold him for making such a row—it could be heard from one end of the flat to the other. She took his hands, as heavy as oars, and opening her dressing-gown, pressed them to her breasts and thighs. Overcoming her revulsion, she stroked her body with his hands, but they fell back indifferently as soon as she let them go. Then she tried to push him out of her way and enter the room by force, but Globov threw her back, stepped forward and locked his door.

The bottles were safe, but there was no baby inside his tunic. He must have hugged her too tight when he was rocking and accidentally squashed her. Or, more probably, she had been kidnapped while Marina was there.

Of course! How could he be so slow. It was all Marina's doing. She had already killed his daughter once and now she was trying again, the slut. That's why she had made up to him and wanted to lie on the sofa. Naturally, the sofa!

But he had seen through her, and so she had brought in the murdering doctors led by Rabinovich himself. While she used her charm on him they, the white-coated killers, trampling underfoot the sacred name of science, did their dirty work behind his back.

Someone was sitting motionless inside the cupboard. Globov took his short sword down from the wall—a real Caucasian sword engraved with the owner's name and presented to the 4th Cavalry Guards as a token of esteem.

The cupboard split at the second blow. Glass tinkled, splinters flew and plaster fell from the walls. The enemy, escaping by a trick, hid in the cracks and dug himself in in corners.

It was useless for Marina to scream at the door, telling him to stop his disgraceful performance, threatening to leave the house, to take a lover, to commit suicide, to report him to the Party as an alcoholic. Nothing doing. He wasn't such a fool as that. The whole world knew about her tricks by now! Furious and elated,

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he went on chopping, tearing, slashing at whatever came to hand. He spared neither Karelian pine, nor crystal, nor down-cushions. What use was all this junk? When the enemy is within your doors, everything in sight must be destroyed, and the house itself with the enemy inside it must be rubbed off the face of the earth.

Glancing off the wall, the sword struck his head and smashed the chandelier. But even in the darkness, and streaming with blood, he went on beating the air, beating the empty space, hitting at whatever gave them cover.

His work done, the Prosecutor went up to his desk, which was scored and slashed all over. There by the window loomed the plaster-bust which, by a miracle, had remained intact. The Prosecutor sheathed his sword and made his report:

"Master, the enemy is in flight. He has killed my daughter and seized my son. My wife has betrayed me and my mother has cast me out. Now I stand before you, wounded and forsaken as I am, and say: Our goal is reached. We have conquered. Master, hear me! We have conquered! Do you hear me?"

VII

THE Master was dead.

The town seemed empty as a desert. You felt like sitting on your haunches, lifting up your head and howling like a homeless dog.

Dogs who have lost their masters stray about the earth and sniff the air in anguish. They never bark, they only growl. They keep their tails between their legs, or if they do wag them, they look as if they were crying.

When they see a human being coming, they run aside and gaze at him longingly—is it *he* at last?—but they don't come near.

They wait, they are forever waiting, gazing, longing: "Come! Come and feed me! Come and kick me! Beat me as much as you like (but not too hard, please). Only come!"

And I believe that he will come, just and chastising. He will make you squeal with pain, and leap, tugging at your chain. And you will crawl to him on your belly, and gaze into his eyes, and lay your tousled head on his knees. And he will pat it, and laugh, and growl reassuringly in his cryptic master's dialect. And when he falls asleep, you'll guard his house and bark at the passers-by.

Already, you can hear the whine here and there:

"Let's live in freedom and enjoy ourselves, like wolves."

But I know, I know only too well, how they guzzled in the past, these mercenary creatures—poodles, spaniels, pugs. And I don't want freedom. I want a Master.

Oh, the misery of a dog's life! How shall I ever satisfy my sharp hunger, for years denied?

How many lost, homeless dogs wander about the world?

Oh, bitches with almond eyes and thin, sharp muzzles. Oh, angry, lonely, knowing dogs!

*

HE was washed, embalmed, and placed upon a pedestal.

Countless thousands came to gaze at him and take their leave. The crowds poured out of every street into the narrow passage between the houses and got stuck.

The passage was the way out to where the dead body rested, watched by guards and surrounded by flowers.

But the way was barred. Orders were awaited. They had not yet come because the one who always gave the orders now lay dead.

The huge square, trodden by countless feet, was now too small. There was no room for all who wished to take their leave and gaze. Yet more and more arrived with every passing minute. And when at last the narrow passage was thrown open, it was too late. Someone, delighted at the chance to stretch his lungs, yelled in a ringing voice:

"They've had us, lads! It's all up with us."

And the stampede began.

*

THE window was curtained and the lamp extinguished, as Marina had insisted. As his sense of sight shifted to his fingertips, Yury felt as if they blinked.

Undressing her, he could contemplate the immense complexity of her architecture: arches, apses, cupolas. Onion domes like breasts and pointed gateways like the belly pointing towards the groin.

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But the guitar predominated: shoulders, waist, pelvis. No wonder Picasso had such a liking for guitars and violins: their shape was that of the cross-section of a woman's body.

But desire he had none. Yury reminded himself of his impatience in the pursuance of his aim, of the means he had used to reach it. . . . But he had no desire.

Suppose it really came to nothing? He became alarmed, knowing that he must not be nervous, that a man in such a case must be as confident as a conjurer of whom wonders are expected. More and more alarmed at his nervousness, he clutched at the apses and domes and arches set out before him. He was imploring his weak flesh which had so stupidly, so shamefully betrayed him at the very last moment, to grant him, if not passion, then at least a little lust.

The bed-springs thrummed like a guitar.

Yury clenched his teeth and made a despairing effort to lift a ton weight. Finally he called to mind the pornographic postcards he had long kept in a hidden place, and, going over their obscenities, prayed: "Lord, help me!"

The ideally-constructed woman lay beside him motionless, leaving him to sweat to his heart's content. With all his wasted soul, with all his flesh, worn out by fruitless labours, he detested her—the unattainable attained—and dreamed only of the moment when he could throw her out—how gladly—as soon as it was possible.

"Well, Yury Mikhaylovich, have you reached your goal?" Marina asked, amused. "Why so slow?"

Yury closed his eyes in silence, though it was quite useless closing them in the pitch-black room.

*

THE Prosecutor never clearly understood how it could have happened. He had been standing decorously with the others waiting to go through, when all at once he realised that he was being swept on by the crowd, gyrating in a spiral across the square into the passage, narrow as a trench.

The passage led straight through the centre of the town, where the dead Master's body reposed on a pedestal surrounded by flowers. So the Prosecutor did not resist the pull but helped all he could; but to move your feet in this crush was as difficult as talking with your mouth full. The quicker and the closer he approached the goal, the more he was carried to one side; the spiral winding itself up swept him off his feet. People were climbing over one another, stumbling, falling. Where one had been knocked down, six others took his place and the struggle continued. Everybody strove eagerly to get inside the passage, narrow as a trench.

The Prosecutor was too stout to take part in the scuffle. He neither scrambled, nor shoved, nor swore. But a mighty hand as big as the square snatched him round the body, squeezed him so that he almost choked, and slightly lifting him above the ground, cudgelled to right and left.

"Let me go! You're hurting!" sobbed the Prosecutor. "These are our own people, they've done no harm. There are women and children, and even war invalids who brought you glory."

But the prehensile fingers had him in a death grip. Using him as a bludgeon, grieving and embittered, the hand struck and struck at the mob howling with pain.

*

THERE was no hurry to go anywhere. Marina stood by the newspaper kiosk; the papers were in mourning and looked like women with heavily-made-up eyes. She turned her back on the monotonously busy street and peered into the unlit window of a beauty-shop. There she saw herself in a distorting mirror. People walked across her, trolley-buses drove past, and flasks of scent and pyramids of coloured soap drove through them.

"All these beauty preparations only spoil your skin," she thought as she looked sulkily at her image. But her face, smudged with shame and temper, trodden by the shadows of the passers-by, remained beautiful enough.

"To-morrow I'll try that Argentinian lipstick," she decided.

*

BY crawling underneath a truck and climbing over the railing which fenced off the boulevard, Globov managed to escape, though he grazed his shins and lost his hat. The boulevard was spacious and deserted.

Shouts came from behind him:

"A little girl! A litle girl has been crushed!"

In the darkish passage were others who had slipped away. Happy to have got off cheap, they kept worrying about some girl:

"Crushed! Trampled on!"

"That wasn't mine. Mine fell down on her own. Nobody trampled her. And her glasses had been broken before I got there, and she wasn't a little girl, she was of age."

"A little girl, a little girl," voices in the crowd

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insisted stubbornly. "Stop the man who did it. . . . She fell under the truck. . . . What are you gaping at? Get the man, get the man!"

"If it's mine, it was her own fault. People shouldn't get under one's feet. I fell down myself. Nobody is guilty here. Victims are unavoidable. But then—it's for the aim."

He was at the end of his tether. He lay down to rest on the snow as white as milk fresh from the cow. Just behind the snowdrift next to him they were still looking for the culprit and discussing the unknown girl:

"Who knows, perhaps it was a spy or a saboteur who did it, an enemy of the people. Who arranged for this crush? Why aren't the militia here? Where's the Interrogator! Where's the Public Prosecutor? They ought to be tried, people like that."

Epilogue

At the bottom of a small hill near the bank of the Kolyma, we were digging a ditch, Seryozha, Rabinovich, and I.

I had come to the camp later than the others, in summer '56. The contents of my story, finished except for the epilogue, had become known to some highly-placed officials. As could be expected, the cause of my downfall was the aforementioned drag-net, fixed inside the big sewage pipe underneath our house.

The rough drafts I had conscientiously flushed down the drain every morning went straight to Interrogator Skromnykh's desk. The important personage whose instructions I had carried out, though perhaps not altogether faithfully, was by this time dead and his personality was, indeed, being subjected to a public re-evaluation. Nevertheless I was accused of slander, pornography, and divulging State secrets.

I had no defence: the evidence was to hand. Besides, Globov, who was called as a witness, produced documents which proved my guilt conclusively and in full. In the course of the interrogation it was established that everything I had written was pure invention, the product of a morbid and malicious mind.

Another failing, gravely criticised, was that my positive heroes (Counsel for the Defence Karlinsky, Prosecutor Globov, the housewife Marina, the two plain-clothes men, etc.) were not portrayed in all the fullness of their many-sided working lives, but maliciously presented to the reader in their least typical aspects. As for the negative characters—the child-murderer Rabinovich, the saboteur Seryozha and his accomplice Katya, who had become aware of her mistakes too late and was therefore trampled underfoot by an indignant public—it is true that in my slanderous story they were punished as they deserved, but the reactionary basis of their motivation was not fully revealed.

Not venturing to hope for clemency, I begged only to make some corrections, at least in an epilogue, where, taking the above criticisms into account, I would show my characters in a more fitting light. I was allowed to do so, but not to take time off from my general re-education, or from the earth-works which formed a part of it at Kolyma.

Soon after I arrived I teamed up with Seryozha and Rabinovich. We succeeded without much difficulty in being put into the same hut and placed under common supervision. The amnesty had virtually emptied the camp of its inmates. Only some ten thousand of us, dangerous criminals, were left. The authorities, now more lenient, allowed us to form a shock unit of three, under a special guard with a machine-gun in good working order.

It must be said, however, that the only shock worker in our team was Seryozha, who thought it an essential duty to co-operate in the effort to bring the Glorious Future nearer. Owing to our age, Rabinovich and I lagged behind him.

Seryozha did his fervent best to instil into us the basic principles of the new ethic. Our daily bread ration of 400 grams each was pooled and entrusted to Rabinovich until dinner-time, when it was again divided into three equal parts.

What was the point of this, I asked? We still received our 400 grams each, or rather a little less, because Rabinovich secretly nibbled a small piece off each of our portions.

"That's all right," Seryozha reassured me. "What matters is not the ration itself but the principle of equal distribution of all material goods."

One day as I was scratching the frozen earth with my spade, I took the opportunity to ask him:

"What does your father write from Moscow, Seryozha?"

He shrugged his shoulders with assumed indifference.

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"We don't correspond, Scribbler." (This nickname was given me because of my former profession.) "Granny wrote some time ago that he had been promoted."

"What did I tell you?" I exclaimed, delighted with the chance to speak on a theme close to my heart. "I knew he would go far. Believe me, Seryozha, I have an old and deep devotion to your father. Just as I love Emilyan Pugachev who turned into Suvorov, and the thunder of tanks on cobblestones, and the roar of loudspeakers, and all the elaborate trumpery of our heroic age proudly proceeding across the face of the earth with a clank of medals and decorations. And if in spite of orders from above I failed to defend your father with my puny body, it was not for lack of will but of opportunity—the chance to save him just never occurred. It was he who was always saving others, he who prosecuted. Ah, if he were being stoned, how gladly would I have died for him. But he was not stoned."

My confidences did not seem to please Seryozha for he changed the subject.

"Yes. Well. My father considers me a renegade. But my stepmother, Marina, is quite different, and who would have believed it! I got a parcel from her yesterday."

"Oh, how like a Russian woman!" I exclaimed, my mouth watering. "Even as far back as the Decembrists. . . . Princess Volkonsky and Princess Trubetskoy, following their husbands to Siberia! Do you remember Nekrasov's lines about Russian womanhood: *'She halts a bolting steed, she walks into a burning hut.'* . . . What is there in the parcel?"

"A box of liqueur chocolates."

"Nothing else?"

"Nothing."

It couldn't be helped. Liqueur chocolates were better than nothing. We gave half of them to our guard, and without climbing out of the ditch made an exquisite picnic meal of the rest.

As always in moments of rest, we were entertained by Rabinovich. He had been acting rather oddly of late. Perhaps he had been driven out of his mind by the rehabilitation of the doctors. Rabinovich had been tried in connection with their case, but for some reason the authorities had forgotten to rehabilitate him. But more probably, with his Jewish slyness, he was putting it on: the insane were treated leniently and quite often released into a madhouse.

Whatever the reason, his conversation had recently become so obscure as to be unintelligible. He was always talking about God, history, and ends and means. Sometimes it was very funny.

Now, as he finished his last chocolate, he took out of his wadded jacket a curious piece of iron covered with earth and rust.

"How do you like that, Scribbler?" He turned to me with an inane smile.

Seryozha was delighted: "It's an archæological find! Some unknown predecessor of Yermak must have passed through here, say in the 16th century. Perhaps he went right on to America. Perhaps he forestalled Columbus! The find should go to a museum at once and be kept under glass, in order to establish our priority."

The priority would certainly be established, I suggested, but as a lethal weapon the find must be handed in to the camp authorities.

It was a dagger, eaten away by rust and with a handle shaped like a crucifix.

"How do you like that?" asked Rabinovich again. "A nice place they found for God—the handle of a deadly weapon. Are you going to deny it? God was the end and they turned Him into the means—a handle. And the dagger was the means and became the end. They changed places. *Ay-ay-ay.* And where are God and the dagger now? Among the eternal snows, both of them!"

"We've had quite enough of your survivals of the religious past!" I moved nervously away from him. (Evidently citizen Rabinovich had been sent here for good reason.) "Everyone knows that there is no god. We don't believe in god, we believe in dialectics."

Rabinovich leapt up, a puny Jew with a shorn head, in tattered, muddy trousers and with a rusty dagger under his arm.

"And what do you think I'm saying? Am I arguing with you? Not on your life!"

Seizing the dagger in both hands, he raised it like an umbrella and poked it at the sky which hung lowering over our ditch.

"In the name of God! With the help of God! In place of God! Against God!" He really did sound like a madman now. "And now there is no God, only dialectics. Forge a new dagger for the new Purpose!"

I was just about to object when the soldier who kept us from the danger of escaping woke up on his hillock and shouted:

"You there, in the ditch! You've wagged your tongues long enough! Get on with your work!"

We took up our spades as one man.

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On Two Marble Feet and a Marble Tree dug up last autumn by a Ploughman in the Roman Campagna

(*for Lyndall*)

Sleeping in darkness, the tip of a chisel
Once tapped me awake, a snowfall of splinters
  Dissolving the thicketed marble
  And looping me about with weightless sunbeams,

Leaning me here on the stem of an oak-tree.
Was there a circle of wide leaves, a fillet,
  A wreath round my forehead? A sickle,
  Poppies and wheat-ears entwined, an unstrung

Bow in my hand, a wand plaited with tendrils?
A long flute or berries? None can remember.
  The shade of vine leaves over water,
  Sheaves, instruments, the voices of reapers,

Pigeons alighting there, the touch of children,
Fingers on drawn strings, some pillars and meadows,
  Sunsets along the floor and moonlight
  And tired words of decay in the senate;

Sieges recalled, theatres in Bithynia,
Parthian troubles and rumours from Egypt,
  Fluteplayers and laughing and whispers,
  The track of comets, the soul, and omens—

All these there were, and uncountable summers;
And, finally, talk of strange men and watch-fires
  And flight; then a moulting of garlands
  And cups forgotten on the mosaic.

Newcomers' voices spoke in the portico,
The steel flickered and sparks lit up the fragments
  And stopped all the flutes and scattered me
  For blind centuries under the harvests.

Steel found me again and here stands the oak-tree.
I lean there no more. But my shining feet are
  Unfettered, a heel ready lifted
  For flight into the woods or for dancing.

Patrick Leigh Fermor

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Richard Hoggart

The Uses of Television

BY NOW one feels a little hesitant about running through the potential advantages of television, just because they have been so often and so uncritically rehearsed. Yet it is all in some ways true: television can stimulate immense numbers of people; it does offer "windows on the world" and may "widen our outlook"; and, yes, it is so intimate that the usual tricks of crowd-rhetoric are exposed by it. But all this needs looking at more closely.

We say that television is an acid-test of sincerity, that it will make for truth and reasonableness in political discussion, that the day of the demagogue is over. If a man is a "phoney," we say, it shows at once. Certainly it is not difficult to believe that the McCarthy hearings on television in the United States helped to accelerate the Senator's downfall. But the "sincerity-test" has become the most common cliché in writings about television, and we should now make a self-denying ordinance against using it. It is true only at the extremes—with such a man as McCarthy; or, to take the other extreme, with such a man as Father Huddleston, who gives a sense of transparent conviction. Much more, he *impresses* as well as moves us by other qualities: a complex honesty, a mature and dignified humility. Between these extremes, television does not always distinguish between sincerity and assumed sincerity; it is a blunt but rather bludgeoningly intimate instrument. More important, this stress on not only the fundamental but the final value of sincerity (typical of much popular criticism in all the arts) is inadequate. A man does not need to be a humbug to be a dangerous fool. Sincerity is not enough. Of itself even the 21-inch screen gives no help in deciding which sincerity is informed by thought and imagination and which is a thinly-based and self-deluding enthusiasm.

Certainly television may stimulate and widen, or may prompt us to allow these changes to begin to occur. Think of one season's features on, say, *Panorama*, going into thousands upon thousands of homes, getting behind thousands of lace curtains and potted bulbs, past ranks of chintz settees and modernistic climbing plants. Who, we are often asked, can estimate the liberating, the kneading effect of this detailed and intelligent presentation of the day-to-day texture of other people's lives, assumptions, hopes? Who can, indeed, estimate the effect such things may have? If we do allow them to work in this way, television may well be a most important *primary* educator.

Of its more direct educational possibilities television has so far hardly scratched the surface. Many people are now trying to develop these possibilities. Yet I believe the gains they will make will be largely tactical not strategic. I am thinking, of course, of television as a mass public medium, not of closed-circuit programmes to comparatively tiny and selected audiences.

In general there is never going to be enough time on television, and the sense of a huge mixed audience is likely to be too inhibiting, for any but preparatory education to be undertaken. Television can break down

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the complicated into a succession of vivid, visual, manageable segments. In presenting the complex it can stimulate by its vividness and immediacy but can rarely go much further because of its inherent disadvantages, shortness of time and largeness of audience. Professor J. Bronowski's recent and very carefully devised series on ITV was a good example of the first possibility (presenting the complicated). The New York *Sunrise Semesters*, which I have not seen, seem to be a striking example of the second (presenting the complex). There, I believe, a half or even three-quarters of an hour is given—at so early a time in the morning that at first no advertiser was willing to sponsor the programmes—to a series of talks on "Great Books." There are several good stories about the success of the series (though some may be apocryphal): in one day New York City sold out of copies of *Le Rouge et le Noir* and also of alarm clocks. I understand the course can now be taken for credit in at least one of the New York Colleges. This is remarkable and suggests at the very least that there is a desire for "culture," and perhaps even for learning, among a great number of people. But no matter how many people saw the programme at any one time, what was presented was a succession of single half or three-quarter hours to a number of *individuals*, with no opportunity for discussion, going back on one's tracks, changes of speed, questions or any of the intimate give-and-take of a live seminar. The challenges made to all those individuals were of a very limited kind.

In short, the advantage of television is that it can, instantaneously and sharply, offer huge numbers of people a sense of the excitement and variety and possible depths of knowledge. Its limitation, in normal conditions, is that it is a creature of daily or weekly fresh starts. It is like a show which, though it may claim that it never closed, yet went on making much the same sort of presentation (in both the usual senses) to new audiences. It can rarely assume any continuity; it is almost always making introductions. Television is a magnificent gateway; or, in view of the uses to which it is now being put by ITV at peak hours, we should say it could be a magnificent gateway. But those who work with it have to spend most of their time oiling the hinges, finding new ways of tempting people to come up to the gate; they are almost never able to plough a pasture within or see a season through on the far side.

Television—and most forms of mass communication—raises new and difficult questions. There is, for instance, the matter of imaginative commitment. Think of the great number of earnest documentaries on both television channels: on the "colour problem," nuclear warfare, "the problem of youth," and so on. We can guess why there are so many; they are transparent yet heavy with intelligent good intentions. Yet they are almost always fundamentally off-key, irrelevant to the pressure and depth and grotesqueness of "problems" as we meet them in life. Most of them give as nearly as they can a "balanced," an "objective" picture, one which represents a "fair cross-section" of the "typical people" involved in the "problem." I wonder what effect they have at the level at which we say "bloody niggers" or "those damn teen-agers ought to be horsewhipped." They recall those surveys of television programmes which decide that this programme is "wholesome" because virtue triumphs in the end and there is little violence, whereas that is less "wholesome" because virtue is killed or goes mad and violence abounds. By these criteria the latest improving novelette is more "wholesome" than *King Lear*.

Part of the trouble here is, once again, that the audience is undifferentiated. The truth of the imagination is a committed truth, though not in a narrowly political sense. If it is broken down into statements those statements will look biased because the element will have changed. So mass communications tend to seek an "objectivity" which can be pretty well statistically demonstrated, and, if necessary, defended against those literal-minded pressure-groups which haunt all public organs of opinion. It may be, too, that there is a

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more general tendency among individuals—perhaps more widespread to-day than it used to be—to hold to the semi-scientifically demonstrable in preference to that which is called "mere impressionism" or even "mere interpretation." Further, writers in Britain are so used to working within known limits, not only of *genre* but of unconsciously-assumed audience, that they feel outfaced by the imponderables within a new medium of communication. What can we assume with an audience that has not selected itself as have those who are regular readers of the weekly journals? What language can we use? How far and in what ways can certain attitudes be explored?

We may get depressing answers to all these questions, but the point is that they have hardly been asked in Britain. Some people are thinking about the more tractable educational possibilities of television; few have thought much about its imaginative possibilities. We rely, therefore, on straight translations from other forms of art. I know of no one in Britain (or for that matter in the United States) who has written on the potentialities of a peculiarly television drama with the insight and technical closeness of Mr. Paddy Chayefsky. He argues, in a way I find convincing, that television drama is introspective, Chekovian; that its strength as a dramatic medium will be in the exploration in depth of problems of character and personal relationships. He seemed at one time to believe, until the pressures of commerce made him leave television writing, that by this approach he could legitimately find a large audience. It would not be as large as the audiences for the more successful quiz shows. But it would be bigger than any audience that could be contained within the usual highbrow or middlebrow boundaries.

In Britain we are habitually disinclined to spend energy on productions so quickly presented and ended; and we lack the right sort of encouragement from those in charge of the television organisations. The programme companies in ITV spend some money in sponsoring competitions for television playwriting, and tell us often that this is a considerable fillip to the "creative cultural life of this dynamic new medium." I am not at all impressed but regard these competitions, as they are at present arranged, chiefly as a means of producing a stock of plays and playwrights to feed the relentless sausage-machines of the drama departments. The plays they produce are usually essays in craft, in working within given and unquestioned concepts. So the emphasis they give will be, to take a comparison from writing, like that of the "schools of journalism." The BBC could counter ITV here, not by inspiring yet another group of processed plays, but by setting up, say, a fellowship in television drama: they might pay someone who has already shown ability as a writer simply to prowl round the studios, read and think, and then try to write a play. It might be a flop, or it might be the beginning of something worthwhile. Much the same might be done for documentary (which I should like to see moving towards the free essay), and for some other fields. There is simply not enough imaginative thinking at present; there is plenty of virtuosity but little of artistic virtue.

But whatever the developments in the imaginative use of television, its basic work must always be direct and discursive. It must try, clearly, helpfully, and demotically, to speak to and for the variety and the strengths of its society. This is itself a very difficult job and in the long run will be done well only by people whose hands are not tied, who are free from artificial pressures and external aims.

This is one of several reasons why the introduction of commercial television was a defection of the responsibility of Parliament. For in Britain the fabric of class and culture is so densely interwoven that it is difficult simply to speak to anyone outside one's known groups. By all kinds of characteristics —of which accent is only the first we are likely to think of—our communication is likely to be more blurred than we realise: we will suggest what we do not mean to suggest and create an impression different from that we intended.

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I hope a wide variety in styles of speech remains, whether brought about by geography or occupation. But television is often hindered by something more than this, by the disabling associations of certain styles in speech with class and status snobberies. This is true of many other forms of expression—furnishing, physical movements, emotional reactions; and no doubt there are parallels even in a society such as the United States. But the British situation is peculiarly involved and deeply rooted. A few years ago Mr. Joseph Trenaman published some of his researches into the reception of programmes with an "educational content" on sound radio. His most striking finding was not that some people are put off such programmes because the vocabulary is "above their heads" or because the background assumed was greater than they possessed (both the BBC and ITV now have these limitations very much in mind), as that they resisted right from the start the tone and atmosphere of the programmes. It may be, too, that some people are drawn by this tone, because they identify it with a "cultured" condition. From BBC programmes in particular, one often feels that too simple an equation is being made: that the tones, styles, attitudes, patterns for emotional expression of "the cultured middle class" are the norm to which all aspirations for "culture" should aspire; and that the more these can be transmitted the more will sweetness and light appear in British society. (This is what Sir Robert Fraser enjoys calling the Golden Man or Platonic Guardian assumption.)

Of such programmes the outstanding example is *The Brains Trust.* One can enjoy it sometimes, if rather quizzically. But there would not be much gain if most of Britain confronted problems in just this manner; indeed there would be some loss in bringing many of us to this condition. I don't think I undervalue the qualities which these attitudes can embody: tolerance, reasonableness, disinterestedness. But many of these qualities can be found, unregarded because expressed rather differently, in other social groups. Conversely, we often assume that the display of these more acceptable outward forms is a guarantee of the existence of these inner qualities. It is not surprising that some of Mr. Trenaman's witnesses assumed in advance that such programmes were not for them; they were, rather, for "Them." And to-day "Them" often means not only the traditional middle and upper-classes but the "grammar-school types," those who have been accepted for further education by society. We need to think much more flexibly about how to ensure that the energy formerly wasted in maintaining the sillier and meaner aspects of class distinction is not now wasted in maintaining a stratification by educational opportunity.

If we believe that "ability" is both more widespread and complex a quality than can be winnowed out by selecting one in five at eleven-plus, if we believe that many more people than the commercial mass-media assume can think responsibly and feel deeply, then we have to try—especially in the public service mass-media—to create more areas for demotic meeting. It is common knowledge that one of the more respectable reasons for ITV's initial success was their sense of this need (though their motives are biased). And by now a few BBC programmes are giving pointers to the right kind of development here.

I HAVE already suggested that television can be an important primary educator. In a much wider sense it will be an important general educator, an educator in manners, a way of transmitting—by implication and suggestion—attitudes and assumptions different from those many in its audience have previously held. In any society a medium so intimate and pervasive will do this; it is bound constantly to be putting before people other ways of shaking hands, of sitting down, of wearing clothes, of reacting to strangers, of eating, of carrying on conversations; it is bound constantly to be setting in motion numerous slight but widespread reactions.

But some other changes in British society to-day seem, in any event, to be encouraging a greater cultural openness. They are likely

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to bring about a relative decline in the importance of the local, face-to-face community as an educator in manners. These communities, whether of a neighbourhood or a workbench, will still be important educators: talk at work or round a lamp-post or at the edge of a dance-hall or in a coffee-bar, and the acceptance of the habits of these groups, will all have their persistent educative effect. And teen-agers in particular pay comparatively little attention to television. But for most of us the box in the corner will have a relatively more important place as a moderator of manners.

Spend a week regularly watching television on either or both channels and you almost feel the cakes of custom being cracked open. If I have left an area in which I simply knew that one put half-length white lace curtains on the living-room window, how do I choose the curtains for my house on a new estate? Partly by keeping to custom, partly by looking at the neighbours' houses—and partly by reading the new women's magazines and by taking examples from television. And so with a host of other questions, which do not come near the threshold of consciousness: about how to conduct relationships in a new community; or in a new form of work; or with teenage children who often seem to have few of the assumptions we had at their age. Many of these are questions which previously we did not know we harboured or in fact did not harbour. As some of the older ways of transmitting habits, by "rubbing-off" in comparatively static groups, become less powerful, as more money for more people makes more choices available, so the media of mass-communication become more important as guides to choice, that is, as guides to attitudes, since attitudes inform choices.

THIS is a trend of the most unusual interest and significance. In some respects *Dixon of Dock Green* is probably a more powerful factor in general education than a whole range of evening institute classes in non-vocational subjects.

This slightly transmogrified documentary is written by a man with an acute ear for the surface of current speech and manners, and a remarkable responsiveness to the more immediate and evident contemporary situations. Each instalment is really a dramatised secular parable played by characters who are almost alive. And all the time, consciously or unconsciously, it is trying to ameliorate manners—from the sensible, direct injunctions by P.C. Dixon himself to "watch your step when crossing the road" (which is directly educational in the same way as those public-service advertisements which enjoin us to sneeze into a handkerchief, though more sympathetically mediated) to the very attitude to the police themselves. It is so pervasive that one police force has been recommended to revert to helmets in place of caps, since helmets are now associated with the fine qualities of P.C. Dixon.

Traditional working-class attitudes to the "cops" were a compound of suspicion, scorn, laughter, and respect. Compare that with the clean, simplified, kindly figure of the "cop" which is being presented here. Where is the world in which the police beat you up at the station if you've made it difficult for them to get you there? where you suspect that they always stick together and will lie to the magistrates to do so? where you believe they are lenient with the local nobs? I am not saying that these qualities exist all the time and unrelieved. But one knew and knows that they do exist, within a whole texture of attitudes to the police, a texture that has been formed in the stresses of experience, a texture that is not simply mean and suspicious but is subtle and finely qualified. The picture of the police which is offered in *Dixon of Dock Green* is obviously a "nicer" picture, yet it has a thoroughly unreal, wished-for quality. Perhaps it would be "nice" if life were like that, though I doubt it.

We do not really know how far this programme—and the others for which it stands—affect attitudes. *Dixon of Dock Green* is not art but it is semi-imaginative; and it may therefore have more effect than the more direct and rational documentaries. No doubt the effect of such half-art is slow, but it may eventually (in combination with the other

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forces of which it is both a part and a reflection) be considerable. *Dixon of Dock Green* is a BBC production and the BBC is a public-service organisation. Few organisations are similarly striving to be disinterested.

Of those which disinterestedly assist the making of choices to-day the most immediately striking, though it is comparatively very small, is the Consumers' Association, which gained a membership of more than one hundred thousand less than two years after it had been formed. It is the product of a society which has reached a high level of consumption and possesses a fairly large number of people ready to try to make the choice of consumer goods a matter for deliberate discrimination. The other side of the coin may be seen in the "commercials" on ITV, and these do not work through the encouragement of rational choice. They are forms of bastard art, based largely on emotional appeals often irrelevant to the rational case for using their products. It is an odd irony that the more disinterested workers in television tend, as I said earlier, to be chary of the deep waters of "art" and to feel safer with a more "objective" approach; whereas those who are less disinterested, who wish to sell, should forcefully misuse some of the methods of art. If you produced a modern *Merchant of Venice* (Shakespeare's is a "classic" and so in a special box) you might be accused of anti-semitism by several watchful organisations; if you wrote a modern *Othello* you might be accused of exacerbating the colour problem. But you may make the most thoroughgoing and questionable assumptions so as to sell soap—grossly distorting the nature of married love or family life or sexual attraction or friendship between colleagues—and no one will do more than smile or be mildly irritated.

Of course, most of us do not make most of our choices objectively and dispassionately. And even those professional and intellectual groups which largely support the Consumers' Association make many of their choices, especially in artistic matters, on prestige and snobbish grounds. We may tolerate no nonsense about detergents but we tolerate a lot in our choice of pictures and books. But for a great many of us the choice of quite ordinary consumer goods has rarely been a matter of weighing up the pros and cons of various types. Small material snobberies apart, we have often sought to buy with these goods dreams, gaiety, colour. The success of Lux toilet soap many years ago with working-class women was more moving than comic. It would be inhuman not to appreciate the force of this attitude in a world whose material rewards were drab and limited.

What irks me is that new adroit organisations are using the mass-media to increase this habit in a Britain where life need not be so drab and horizons not so limited. The television "commercials" are the successors to the old coloured mail-order catalogues, but much more sophisticated. They do not simply exploit old habits; they seek to extend them. In an expanding commercial society they sell people not only the dreams they already nourish, but new dreams for new needs or possible needs. The medium is being used as a streamlined machine for developing what are, after all, undesirable associations, since we have all to keep on trying not to father our emotions on to situations and things unworthy of them. I would like to see television assist much more the making of rational choices wherever they are relevant; I would like to see it develop its own imaginative forms in relevant and disinterested ways.

But in the present situation the single most powerful attempt to alter attitudes—to educate manners—in Britain is being made through the advertisements on ITV. There we can see at its plainest the sort of Britain—the quality of life in Britain—which might emerge if the kinds of force it represents were totally and without qualification or resistance in play. There we may see the picture of life which young working-class wives, and lower-middle-class wives, and husbands just taking out the first mortgage ever held in their family, are all being asked

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to find acceptable—so that as many as possible of them will use this soap or feel that they "deserve" this chocolate or "owe it to themselves" to have this refrigerator. What sort of a world are they shown?

It is not a violently crude world; in all sorts of obvious ways it is a very decent world. It is a bright world and a congenitally innocent world, a world prior to the knowledge of good and evil, in which all the young girls have that wonderful Jamesian exclamation-mark between their eyebrows (see the Mirandas of the cocoa-commercials) and even the middle-aged fathers look no more than nicely weathered by sinless winds. But it is a bodiless world and Sir Robert Fraser, like the Father Christmas in a big store, is the public-relations host to it.

What goes on in the office? It would be interesting to know, but not of crucial importance. It is more important to realise the essential childishness, inadequacy, euphoria of this world; and so to question the quality of the life which is being promoted. There is something exceptionally wrong-headed in our almost single-minded concern with questions in Parliament, independent committees or dependent committees (so often and so willingly set up by ITV) to consider the time allowed to this advertisement or the accuracy of that claim. All this has to be done: but we almost wholly ignore the harder question—what are the attitudes which are all the time being transmitted underneath?

These characteristics do not appear simply because some people have commercial reasons for wanting a very large and very quiet audience. As I have said already, one of the strongest limitations on the mass-media—simply because they are mass-media and whether they are public-service or commercial—is their pressing awareness of a huge audience.

A "pure artist" may not be unaware of an audience; but there is a sound sense in which we can say he is unaware of it. He may write for a tribunal of a few friends or the glorious dead or his own conscience. At his best he respects it and is sensitive to it because its standards are those he respects and admires. Between him and it is the standard itself. He is not aware of a vast, unknown, unassessed, varying audience which has to be *won*. This situation is not wholly discreditable; but at the best it is extremely inhibiting. How will a miner in South Wales or a woman on a North Yorkshire farmhouse or a solicitor in London take this? Will some be dangerously shocked? Dare I assume this? How far will most people go along with me if I risk this? As a result even public-service television tends to take the world much as it finds it, or is very careful in deciding how far it can push out along a path not so far well-used.

It can rarely be, in a sustained way, radical or searching. Programmes such as *Tonight* and *Panorama* show that its procedures can sometimes move a little ahead of conventional expectations; yet if we compare the grip of these programmes with what we know of really rigorous and disciplined enquiry we see how wide the gap is. A programme such as *Monitor* is in part a minority programme. But it naturally wants to spread further and in any event its "minority" is immensely larger than the minorities the little magazines talk about. It has to provide a service already acceptable to most of its viewing "minority" and stimulation or "stretch" of a kind which doesn't lose as many as it gains. These are among the basic facts of life even for public-service television, since its audience is comparatively unselected.

How far television will be able to extend from this base depends on a number of factors. I suggested earlier, in a reference to Mr. Chayefsky, possible imaginative developments. When it is being discursive, perhaps a disinterested mass-medium will be, at its best, a little ahead of the line at which ideas have hardened into lethargic assumptions, and as often as possible will be speaking to groups held together by more than the common possession of a television

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set. It is evident that the BBC is better placed to work in this way than ITV. For it is in the interests of the advertisers not to be radical or searching, not to break the audience into minority groups; they have to want mass audiences, mass audiences of masses.

Admittedly, they do not look as nakedly aggressive as this description suggests; and I am sure that many of them are "sincere" and well-meaning. This is a leathery old society, deeply scored with the wrinkles of good intention, caution, patience, and phlegm; and our commercial mass-media both reflect some of these qualities (we are horrified at the *rawness* of commercial television in the United States) and are held in by the checks and balances that have been born of these qualities. Yet when we have read carefully through the Independent Television Act, and have noted all the grand announcements for their prestige programmes, and have observed the weighty members of their advisory committees, when we have done all this we have only to watch the programmes in the peak hours on ITV for a few evenings to appreciate which way that organisation *wants* to push this society. They want to push it towards a generalised form of life which looks much like the life we have known and for the rest looks nicely acceptable—but whose texture is as like that of a good life as processed bread is like home-baked bread.

If the restraints were slighter the process would go on more quickly. This has already happened, as we all know, in some Sunday newspapers (who have no similar Act to limit their tendencies). In the name of the common man they have now reached a nastiness which unites only the worst parts of us all. For the popular Press in general there can now be little hope. Caught up at a crucial time by a combination of technical advances and financial pressures they have become by now so bad as to be chiefly a social disability. Luckily, some of their previous functions have been taken over by broadcasting, and others the journals can fill. For the rest it may be that local and differentiated publications will have to be re-born from the grass-roots.

WHAT we can see in all these media, though the intensity differs, is a sort of processing of attitudes, a processing whose particular forms are chiefly decided by the larger social forces which these media reflect and support.

It is a processing which tries to produce what I have called a cultural classlessness (and I do not mean, as I have already said, an economic classlessness). By extrapolation from these tendencies we can easily imagine a society which was rigidly stratified and yet had a common quality in many of its attitudes. Nor do I mean a society which imposed only a few forms of cultural expression —in which, say, almost everyone watched the same quiz show at the same time. The audiences for such shows would certainly be immense and would cut across class and status boundaries. But a highly-developed consumers' society can make use of a fairly wide range of status-differentiations within artistic activities. It has room for *Vogue* as well as for *Late Extra*, for the arts supplements in the posh Sunday papers as well as for the chauvinistic tabloids, for the cigarettes which distinguish the man who is a little different as well as for the paper which only top people read, for the latest angry young writer as well as for the teen-age singing idol. Such a society would not be ostensibly hostile to "culture." It would make culture a commodity. Nor would it deny the value of radical enquiry; it would be addicted to those discussions or "panel" programmes which parade, like circus animals, a neutered radicalism.

But the disconcerting force and personal humility of genuine imaginative or intellectual activity would have been lost as surely as both the crust and the taste have been lost in that processed bread.

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Arthur Schlesinger Jr.

Varieties of Communist Experience

I HAVE recently returned from a month's trip to the Soviet Union, Poland, and Yugoslavia. So superficial an inspection could hardly be expected to yield profound conclusions. Still a swift and concentrated tour in lands previously known only through the eyes of others offers certain advantages. Old assumptions and expectations dissolve in a flood of new and concrete impressions; the easy abstractions which rule our thought trip up over the complexities of experience. For this traveller, one impression above all was paramount. We have often tended to suppose that Communism, as the most explicit and comprehensive of the ideologies of our day, would stamp the nations under its sway into a fairly uniform mould. The very phrase "the Communist world" conveys the customary notion of essential homogeneity. But what strikes the casual observer—or at least this one—is precisely the heterogeneity of Communist practice. This phenomenon, I think, is worth examination, because it seems likely that such heterogeneity holds out the best, if not the only, hope, for eventual world peace.

Communism is not a monolith; it is a spectrum. At one end of the spectrum lies China—messianic, austere, passionately ideological, deeply fanatical, and inaccessible to the American observer. (Though the State Department has now relented, Peking has not—the problem today is, not American passports, but Chinese visas.) At the other end of the spectrum lie Poland and Yugoslavia—countries whose species of Communism confound the clichés which have dominated Western thought in the last decade. In between lies the Soviet Union, the most powerful Communist nation of them all, a singular mixture of excessive confidence and excessive insecurity, of extraordinary efficiency and exasperating inefficiency, of venturesome innovation and rigid ideology.

Power, of course, settles heavily on the Sino-Russian side of the spectrum. By themselves Poland and Yugoslavia can make little difference to the international balance of force. Yet conceivably, if the Polish and Yugoslav experiences express a possible direction in which Communism might evolve, then what is going on in these smaller countries may be of incalculable significance. It is not too much to suggest that the future may depend on whether the Soviet Union remains within the orbit of ideology or begins to move imperceptibly towards a more genial and pragmatic form of Communism.

THE one safe generalisation about the Soviet Union is that it is in flux. The changes which have taken place since the death of Stalin continue to be a source of local wonder and delight. Soviet citizens talk freely about the "bad times," by which they mean the period from 1948 or so to 1953. When one asks what these years were like, they reply that no one dared speak his private thoughts, no one trusted anyone else, no one was safe from arbitrary and unpredictable terror. This relative candour about the last days of Stalin is curiously devoid of bitterness towards "the Old Man" himself; he is either seen as a great builder who went wrong in his last years or else as an aged leader deceived and betrayed by unscrupulous subordinates, like Beria. Still the frankness about the "distortions" which took place under his sponsorship is of enormous significance. The revulsion against the "cult of personality" and against the omnipotent secret police is deeply felt and genuine. People say over and over with fervent conviction, "We will never go through anything like that again!" (When one asks how they can be sure that the cult of personality will

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not revive, whether any structural changes have taken place to prevent the emergence of a new tyrant, they only say, "Because we have been through this once, we will not permit it to happen again"—a proposition rather more convincing to the speaker than to the beholder.)

The implication of the talk about the "bad times" is that times are much better now. This cannot be gainsaid. There has been a vast increase in personal security. One hears little now about sudden midnight arrests. The secret police have been sharply reduced in power. The streets of Moscow are filled with people trickling back from exile and hard labour in Siberia. The labour camps themselves have apparently undergone a drastic change in character. More than this, Khrushchev, after eliminating Malenkov in the post-Stalin struggle, took over the Malenkov programme (as Stalin once took over the economic programme of Trotsky), and in the last two years has been making a prodigious effort to raise standards of life and comfort. The traveller cannot help being impressed by the variety and abundance (if not necessarily by the quality) of consumer goods in the department stores of the large cities.

At no time since the Revolution have ordinary Soviet citizens felt themselves both so free and so affluent. Quite naturally, they exult in a tremendous debt to the man who made these gains possible. Certainly Khrushchev himself rejoices in their gratitude. Still, to be fair, there is little evidence yet of the emergence of a new personality cult. One sees few pictures of Khrushchev around and no statues, and one does not constantly feel a Big Brotherly presence as one did in pre-war Germany or Italy or in Stalinist Russia. Khrushchev is a rare bird among dictators: he wants very much to be liked. He cares about popular moods, he basks in the affection of crowds, and he goes vigorously around his country as if engaged in a perpetual campaign for re-election.

Watching these developments, some observers have expressed the hope that the combination of personal security, consumer goods, and a dictator who wants to be popular would bring about a relaxation of the grimly ideological character of Soviet society. It has been reasonably argued that political dogmatism cannot survive an increase in free discussion and that administrative totalitarianism will melt away under the diversifications inherent in a consumer economy. All this may be so. There is little evidence for it yet in contemporary Russia.

Nearly all the changes which have taken place since the death of Stalin have been in what the Western liberal must call the right direction. Despite these changes, the Soviet Union remains a theological society. Khrushchev has not liberalised the régime. What he has done is to begin to normalise it. This is not unimportant: the Soviet citizen is acquiring for the first time a sense of what is normal—what is his "right"—in the way both of personal security and of material comfort, and he is not likely to relinquish these norms willingly short of the threat of war against his country. Still, this is quite a different thing from liberalising Soviet society—from making it less dogmatic and totalitarian, more pragmatic and tolerant.

The heart of Soviet dogmatism is the principle of infallibility, applied to leader, to party, and to theory of history. The gains under Khrushchev, far from weakening that principle, may very likely have strengthened it. Thus personal security and consumer goods, by satisfying the urgent demands of the managerial and technical groups, may actually reduce strivings towards intellectual and political liberty and increase political passivity. In the last days of Stalin, Soviet citizens questioned (in the privacy of their minds) the notion that their leadership could do no wrong. But to-day, when leadership is beginning to produce a multitude of pleasurable results, the results themselves—from improving the style of women's shoes to hitting the moon—only verify the infallibility both of the leader and of the ideology behind him.

AT LEAST it is difficult to explain otherwise the characteristic state of mind in the Soviet élite—the stupefying mixture of confidence, ignorance, imperviousness, and incuriosity. Nothing is more dismaying to the visitor than this almost total lack of curiosity (except about new productive methods or techniques). The members of the élite are absolutely confident that they know far more about Britain than Mr. Macmillan or Mr. Gaitskell, far more about France than General de Gaulle, far more about the United States than President Eisenhower or Governor Stevenson. Both this confidence and the accompanying ignorance much disturbed Hugh Gaitskell and Aneurin Bevan on their recent visit to Moscow. A newspaperman who accompanied them has written:

> One of the highest personalities of the régime was entirely ignorant of the existence of the

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> National Health Service in Britain. Another, who accompanied us to an anti-colonial ballet at the Bolshoi, refused to believe that a play opposing racial discrimination could be put on in the United States or that anti-colonial propaganda was legal in Great Britain. . . . The unemployed are believed to be queuing up before all the work-exchanges of Paris and London. . . . On a lower level, things are even worse. Our guide at Leningrad refused to believe that I could welcome Soviet visitors at my home in Paris, or that the best Western writers weren't Communists, or that abstract painting was not an American invention and sign of capitalist decadence, etc. And what was concerned here was not just a natural difference of opinion but incomprehension concerning even what we were talking about.

What seem ascertainable facts to the Westerner are believed in the Soviet Union only when they conform to the official stereotypes. If a statement fits the stereotype, one's Soviet friend beams with triumph; things that don't fit are rejected out of hand with smiles of pitying condescension. Nothing is more futile, by the way, than to hope to encourage the Soviet citizen to candour about his country by admitting faults in one's own. The visitor receives no credit for such admissions; it is rather assumed that the facts are so patent and overwhelming that "even you are forced to admit them." As for foreign comments on life and conditions in the Soviet Union: anything which falls short of fulsome praise is likely to be resented as needling and hostile.

Paddy Chayefsky, the playwright, a member of our party, remarked, "The Soviet Union is like a husband and wife who keep telling everyone all the time how happy they are."

When pressed hard about any point, Soviet citizens seek refuge in talk about their terrible suffering during the Second World War. No one can underestimate the extent of this wartime suffering. Yet most people in the Soviet Union seem to have argued themselves into the conviction that they were the only victims of Nazi terror. Indeed, forgetting their alliance of 1939–41 (and to bring that up in the Soviet Union is accounted the worst of taste), they talk a good deal of the time as if they were alone in resisting Hitler. The fearful ravages of war, carefully renewed in memory by novels and movies, have become the universal alibi, the all-conquering justification of every excess, error, or atrocity committed since. Bevan thus observed to a Ukrainian farmer that he was getting more gallons a year per cow in Britain than Ukrainian cows seemed able to produce. "But you weren't overrun by Hitler," came the inevitable reply. Bevan said: "Those were not the cows that were overrun by Hitler."

One has only to add that, within the élite, manners tend to be pompous and hectoring, and the conception of discussion is hopeless. I had to listen to Yury Zhukov, the Soviet Minister in charge of cultural exchanges, denounce the Russian Research Centre at Harvard for its tendentious and distorted researches in Soviet affairs—tendentious and distorted, it appeared, because they refused to accept official Soviet documents as the last word. The afternoon before, I had spent some time with the Professor of American History in a leading Soviet university and the head of the American section in a leading historical institute. The conversation (conducted through an interpreter) revealed surprising ignorance about American history and historians. (The two Soviet Americanists, for example, had not heard of Richard Hofstadter or Oscar Handlin.) But what does ignorance matter if you already possess the key to the universe?

THIS state of mind has one particularly unpleasant consequence. I have travelled in many countries of the world; but I have never been lied to as casually, contemptuously, and persistently as in the Soviet Union. One expects to be lied to on large issues—that writers are free to write as they please, or that the South Koreans invaded North Korea. These are high-policy lies and comparable lies would doubtless be told foreigners in the United States. But one is lied to equally on petty issues, where what is at stake is not some question of national policy but rather the relationship of one person to another.

An episode is worth recounting. Paddy Chayefsky's parents came from a village in the Ukraine; and it had been his hope that he might be able to re-visit the ancestral home. He communicated this hope to the Soviet Embassy in Washington and again to the Writers' Union in Moscow. In due course, a trip was laid on to Kiev, where the rest of the group would meet local writers and see the town while Mr. Chayefsky would go by automobile to his village. Then, the day before we were due to go, the trip was cancelled. The reason provided by the Writers' Union? "No hotel rooms are available in Kiev."

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The reason did not seem convincing. Mr. Chayefsky pointed out that a Soviet writer, eager to visit a place near Montgomery, Alabama, would be a bit suspicious if he were told that the trip was out because there were no hotel rooms in Montgomery. He then walked over to Intourist where he was informed that there were plenty of rooms available in Kiev. Being a man of determination, Mr. Chayefsky booked passage for New York and announced that he would leave the next day unless the Kiev trip was reinstated by five o'clock that afternoon. A few moments before his deadline, hotel rooms were found.

So we went to Kiev. For Mr. Chayefsky to make his pilgrimage and rejoin the rest of the party on what we were told was "the last plane that evening to Moscow," it was necessary for him to leave the hotel at eight in the morning. He then could drive five hours to the village, stay an hour, and drive back to Kiev in time for the evening plane. But no car appeared at eight, or at nine, or at ten, or at eleven. In Kiev, a city of nearly a million, the Ukrainian Writers' Union seemed unable to find a car and driver for the American writer who wished to see where his parents were born. Around noon a car at last arrived. It was pointed out to Mr. Chayefsky that, if he went now, he could not catch up with the rest of the party that evening. But Mr. Chayefsky's curiosity and determination were at a high point, and he insisted on going. Just before his departure, a new and later Kiev–Moscow plane was discovered; if he hurried, he was now told, he still could get back to Moscow that night.

He left, drove five hours and reached the village. The villagers had never seen an American before. They greeted him with enthusiasm; people who remembered his parents appeared; preparations had already been made for a banquet. Then, after seven minutes, Mr. Chayefsky's escort reminded him that, if he wanted to make the late plane, he would have to depart. They drove furiously back to Kiev, rushed to the airport—and found that there was no late Moscow passenger plane!

Why this fantastic effort to prevent Mr. Chayefsky from seeing his ancestral home? It was partly, no doubt, the feeling that this was a poor village, and that the American writer wanted to see it only to gather material about "negative" aspects of Soviet life. It was partly, too, the deeply-ingrained habits of falsification and contempt.

THESE have been general considerations; our particular concern on this trip was Soviet literary life. Edward Weeks, Alfred Kazin, Paddy Chayefsky, and I made up the first American writers' delegation to visit the Soviet Union under the "Lacy-Zarubin cultural exchange agreement." Seeing writers may not tell one much about the power structure of a country; but it does tell a good deal about the intellectual atmosphere. A good deal—not everything. The presence of a delegation inevitably injects a certain artificiality into a gathering. Frank and confidential interchange is most unlikely, especially with one or two literary bureaucrats on hand. Freedom of comment has unquestionably improved since the death of Stalin, but it is still reserved for chat within the family. Most of the time the Soviet writers, with the exception of one or two who are sufficiently established to be permitted a certain latitude, or sufficiently brave or cynical not to give a damn, give the foreigners a set of weary official responses. Do these people always believe what they say? It is entirely possible that men who seem rigid and impervious when foreigners voice doubts are actually voicing the same doubts themselves in private. Delegations do not have much chance to probe beneath the surface of Soviet culture; and one feels that beneath the surface there is a good deal stirring.

Still, the official atmosphere is what matters for the moment, and delegations get a sizeable dose of this. It is clear, of course, that writers are conceived of by the State—and for the most part conceive of themselves—as instruments in the general task of uplifting Soviet society. In part, this is the expression of a natural patriotic desire to take part in a vast national effort; in part, it is the arrangement of the State to keep so potentially subversive a section of the population under discipline. "Writers are a type of artillery," Khrushchev told the Writers' Congress in May. "They clear the way for our forward movement and help our party in the Communist education of the workers. . . . You must brainwash people with your works."

This is the official literary mission. The editor of *Oktyabr*, a leading cultural magazine, opened a meeting with our group by a rambling stump speech, delivered to the accompaniment of approving chuckles from his claque, about an incident in London when someone had said to him, "You want to conquer us." The editor replied, according to his own account: "Why the hell should we want to conquer you? We have

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more natural resources than any country in the world. We have more gold than any country in the world. We have more diamonds than any country in the world. Etc, etc. Why in hell should we want you? Of course, if you want a fight, we will be glad to take you on and beat you up. But we don't need you and don't want you. All we want is peace." This seemed a strange introduction to a literary discussion; it is regrettably symptomatic. (Alfred Kazin appropriately responded that, since the United States was a richer nation than the Soviet Union, it must therefore be, according to the editor's own argument, even more peace-loving.) Similarly, the editor of *Inostrannaya Literatura* launched into a diatribe on, of all things, science-fiction, seeking to show that Soviet science-fiction revealed a serene, constructive, and optimistic nation, while American science-fiction showed a nation afraid of the future—all this, the editor added, because of the need to keep the people tense and frightened in order to get them to pay the taxes required to maintain the defence-spending required to maintain the capitalist economy. Yet these editors were accounted among the more free-spirited in the Soviet literary world.

The style in which they discussed such matters was as discouraging as the substance. Indeed, there is little better test of the literary sensibility of a society than its taste in rhetoric. Soviet rhetoric is brutal, strident, and banal. It was disconcerting to watch the old formulas of denunciation come tumbling out when otherwise intelligent men ventured into general political or even literary discussion. And where else in the civilised world could the following verse be printed in a serious literary publication?

Ye poets
sing out the grand story
The song
of our young workers' dreams.
Of inspired ones
who win a new glory,
Of Communist
labour teams!

The secrets of science
we'll master.
The problems
of technique we'll beat;
Advancing,
with speed ever faster,
The universe
lies at our feet.

Our enemies
pale from frustration!
How vain now
their blustering seems!
So forward
ye pride of our nation—
Ye Communist
labour teams!

Conceivably, the poem sounds better in Russian than it does in English (but it couldn't sound very much better); in any case, no malice attaches to the translation which was done in Moscow and published in a recent issue of *Soviet Literature*, an English-language publication supposedly devoted to the most exportable Soviet writing.

The obsession with political purpose and effect has created a cult of the mass. The most sophisticated writer in the Soviet Union told us that he learned far more from the thousands of untutored letters sent him about his books than from the most thoughtful literary criticism. A poet said he had received 40,000 letters about a single poem. Can such things be true? If the poet (as he claimed) read all these letters, it would have taken him (allowing two minutes per letter and an eight-hour working day) five-and-a-half months; one wonders when he would have had time to write his poetry. Still, the claim suggests the extent to which the cult of the mass has put a premium on the quantitative approach to literature. Writers fulfil quotas like factory workers. Notes like the following abound in the Soviet literary Press:

> Between the 3rd and 4th Congress of the Ukrainian Writers' Union (1954–59) the Ukrainian writers published 65 new novels, 118 short stories, 193 collections of tales and articles, 295 volumes of verse, and 268 books for children. About 70 new plays were produced. . . . Last year alone over a thousand fiction titles with a total print of over 40 million were published in the Ukraine.

The sense of political mission brings with it an intense preoccupation with literary dogma. "Socialist realism" is still a major issue for the ordinary Soviet writer. At a recent conference on the Problems of Socialist Realism (organised by the Union of Soviet Writers and the Gorky Institute of World Literature), the speaker rather oddly stressed that, "despite the claims to the contrary made by foreign revisionists, the method of socialist realism not only exists, but is steadily developing and becoming richer."

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> The attempts of some bourgeois ideologists to pretend that socialist realism was "decreed" by the State and "foisted on" Soviet writers was nothing short of ridiculous; in fact the history of literature and art had shown that the way had been prepared for this creative method by all the preceding artistic development of mankind and was a new natural stage of this development.

In practice, "socialist realism" tends to become a flexible conception. One doubts whether it really exists at all; an old and cynical writer told us that socialist realism was nothing more than what the people approved. Yet the preoccupation survives; the doctrine worries Soviet writers. And along with it are the other staples of Soviet literary control: the "positive hero," the compulsory optimism, the happy ending. In his Writers' Congress speech, Khrushchev ranged himself with the "positive" writers, the so-called "embellishers."

> Who are the non-embellishers? Some of them say that the principal task of literature consists of rooting out all the faults and failings possible, ignoring at the same time the great conquests of Soviet society. So listen, dear friends, if it is anyone who reveals and lays bare failings and faults, and whose hand will not falter in so doing, it will be the Party and its Central Committee (*stormy applause*).

In other parts of his speech, Khrushchev expressed a genial tolerance towards writing and a hope that writers could hereafter solve their own problems (i.e., substitute self-censorship for State censorship); but his central argument left no doubt about the limited rôle permitted to writers in Soviet society.

THE Soviet conception of the writer as a gunner, an engineer of the soul, a mass educator—as almost anything except a writer—has to be understood if we are to understand what the Soviet Union means by "cultural exchange." It does not mean free trade in ideas. It means rather a series of reciprocal trade agreements, in which usable ideas of one country are bartered for usable ideas of another. The editor of *Oktyabr* explained to us that any impression of Soviet indifference to Western ideas was all wrong. "We are eager to take everything constructive and good you have to offer," he said, and went on to instance agronomy, metallurgy, and engineering as fields in which the West had something to contribute. The implication, in a statement addressed to the American writers' delegation, was plain enough: the Soviet Union had nothing to learn from literary critics, editors, or historians. So the visiting scientist or engineer is assured of a warm welcome and an interested hearing; even the visiting economist finds a ready audience for a discussion of technical problems of economic management; but the Soviet élite is not much interested in the visiting humanist, who, after all, has no techniques to communicate—has, indeed, nothing to lose but his ideas.

The hard fact is that the last thing the Soviet Union cares about is a free exchange of ideas. Nothing is more puzzling, for example, given the blazing self-confidence of the Soviet régime, than the distress, even fear, with which Soviet citizens confront the thought of the sale within the U.S.S.R. of foreign books, magazines, and newspapers. The foreigner in Moscow, going slowly mad as he tries to figure out what is happening in the world from the pages of the London *Daily Worker* and *l'Humanité*, soon begins to enquire why he cannot buy the *Times* or the *Daily Telegraph* of London, or the New York *Times* or *Herald Tribune*. Embassies, government offices, and a few libraries receive copies of foreign magazines and newspapers; but, for all practical purposes, the ordinary foreign visitor or Soviet citizen has no access to non-Communist publications. Why should this be? We used to tell Soviet writers that we would be glad to take them to bookshops in Washington, New York, and London where they could buy *Pravda*, *Izvestia*, and Soviet magazines and books. Why, we would ask, could they not take us to similar places in Moscow? This appeal left them singularly unmoved. So far as one can tell, the present one-way passage strikes most of them as perfectly right and natural.

Pressing the question further produced curious results. A couple of eminent writers, separately explaining why Moscow could not put the London or New York *Times* on sale, cited what they represented as typical Western kiosks, one in Nice, the other on Broadway. From the lurid and somewhat lip-smacking descriptions, one learned that these stands offered nothing but sex and pornography.

"That is what you want to do with us," we were told in grandiloquent tones. "You want to make us accept your Western obscenity and filth. But we say to you that we will not accept it. We will not corrupt our people the way the capitalists have corrupted yours." To this, one replies that the Soviet Union can keep out all the pornography it wants, but that either *Times*

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is not usually regarded as primarily a medium for pornography. One says plaintively: Let us please talk about serious magazines and books and newspapers. Why can't such be sold? The reply comes in increasingly angry and incoherent tones.

"We have told you that we do not want your filth. You want to force your Western ideas upon us. We are going to keep them out. You had better understand that. . . . Etc., etc."

The other argument invoked to defend the ban on foreign publications is that "the time is not ripe," the Soviet people are still like a growing child, and a child has to have its reading selected for it until it reaches maturity. This suggests that admitting the New York *Times* is felt likely in some way to endanger the stability of the régime. When one replies that the theory of the 42-year-old infant is not convincing and that the Soviet régime is surely so well established that it has little to fear from permitting a few hundred copies of the New York *Times* to be sold each day, one only elicits new bursts of incoherence and anger.

How is one to interpret this? Do people become angry because they realise how stupid and feeble their arguments sound? Or do they really feel that Western newspapers and magazines constitute a threat to the régime? I doubt whether it is either of these things. What they do feel, I believe, is a sense of infallibility about their own ideas and a despair at the incomprehension of Westerners or a rage at their macchiavellianism.

"Our people do not want to eat bad food poisoned with the venom of bourgeois ideas," as Khrushchev put it the other day. ". . . Let us take from each other only what is best, exchange what is best, and you eat your rotten goods yourselves."

So long as the Soviet Union remains a theological society, based on the principle of infallibility, it will not permit the circulation of Western scepticism and heresy—and it will remain proud in its prohibition.

THIS state of mind is the psychological expression of what one feels most vividly of all in the Soviet Union—a capacious, unlimited, and arrogant sense of power. It is impressive and scary to see what energy a great nation can generate when it allocates its talent and resources according to an intelligent system of priorities, sternly enforced not just by ruthless coercion (as under Stalin) but by ruthless enthusiasm. In this respect, the unwary visitor must take care to keep his eye on the ball. The American tourist who cried out in the lobby of the Hotel Ukrainia, "These people can't even get me a ticket to Odessa! How can anyone suppose that they could send a rocket to the moon?" misconstrues the situation. He innocently supposes that service to the consumer is the ultimate test of economic and administrative efficiency. Khrushchev operates under no such illusion. The Soviet leadership thinks it important to send a rocket to the moon and not very important to supply tourists with tickets to Odessa, so they apportion their talent and resources accordingly. The able men work on rockets, the dopes on tickets. And one cannot but feel that, if they ever thought tickets to Odessa important, a shift in talent and resources would make Intourist the best travel agency in the world. Our own beloved country meanders along on the opposite theory: we allow the market to determine our national priorities, which means that we allocate a major share of our talent and resources to consumer services and too often leave the sending of rockets to the moon to men who might be better employed selling tickets to Odessa. If three-quarters of the national energy now dedicated to creating and satisfying consumer wants were dedicated instead to building national power, we would not have to worry about the Soviet campaign to "overtake and surpass" the United States.

A mere four years ago, John Foster Dulles assured the House Appropriations Committee that the Soviet Union was "on the point of collapsing." To-day, the Soviet Union has already won the race to the moon; Khrushchev has completed a triumphal tour of the United States; and the American Secretary of Defence has conceded the Soviet Union a 3–1 advantage in the weapon of the future, the inter-continental ballistic missile, by the early 1960's. In every field of national power, the Soviet Union radiates purpose, progress, and success; and it is this discharge of directed national energy which underlies the explosion of Soviet self-esteem. No wonder Russians feel on top of things: experience seems every day to confirm their faith that their ideology has conferred on them a unique mastery of the dynamics of history.

In 1930 Stalin wrote a famous article for *Pravda*. People intoxicated with one gain after another, he said, "become dizzy with success, they lose all sense of proportion, they lose the faculty of understanding realities." Khrush-

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chev's Russia is dizzy with a success of which Stalin's Russia could only have dreamed.

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THE full theological commitment of the Soviet Union is not to be understood until one has visited Poland and Yugoslavia. Passing from Moscow to Warsaw, one has the illusion of entering a free country. This is, of course, just an illusion. Both Poland and Yugoslavia are Communist dictatorships with wide and vital areas (especially in politics and economics) where the régime enforces conformity quite as vigorously as in the Soviet Union itself. Yet, for all this, one feels oneself in qualitatively different cultures. At first, there are only the familiar and comforting signs of Western decadence—pretty girls, slim waists, tipping, hula hoops, shoe-shine boys, sociologists, neckties, advertising posters, kissing in parks. But these clearly are expressions of what is basically a quite different attitude towards Communism itself.

One enters the hotel in Warsaw; on the newsstands are the London and New York *Times*, the *New Statesman*, *Life*. Here Communism is hardly a decade old, not forty-two years, but the authorities are prepared to run the terrible risk of importing a few foreign publications. One evening a friend took me to a reading-room-cum-coffee-shop in the outskirts of Warsaw. Like everything else (or nearly everything else), this was set up and run by the State. There, hanging on the racks for any Polish citizen to read, were not only the usual repertoire of East European papers but also a representation of the wicked capitalist Press, including ample copies of Mr. Luce's favourite picture magazine. In the great bookstore in the Palace of Culture (the repellent Russian-built skyscraper which was Stalin's gift to the Polish people), one can find nearly all the Anglo-American books one wants, short of the most passionate anti-Communist works.

In the Soviet Union, Communism means more than a set of political and economic dogmas: it also means a set of equally rigid moral, æsthetic, literary and metaphysical dogmas, covering every aspect of human existence. A good Soviet Communist not only favours Communism as a form of political and economic organisation; he also abominates abstract art, detests modern music, scorns Proust, and hates religion. The day after I arrived in Poland, an exhibition of contemporary Polish art opened in Warsaw. It consisted almost entirely of abstractions. A Polish Communist told me that a Soviet Communist had recently visited his apartment, noted an abstraction on the wall, and exclaimed with shock and astonishment, "But I thought you were a *good* Communist!" A week later the International Festival of Contemporary Music, complete with dodecaphonic quartets by Schoenberg and even more esoteric pieces by Boulez, opened in Warsaw. A leading Communist cultural weekly in Warsaw was serialising excerpts from the *Remembrance of Things Past*. When one asked Polish writers about "socialist realism" they laughed derisively, and replied that no one had talked about *that* in Poland for five years. The introduction to an English-language book on Maja Berezowska, a favourite Polish artist (whose drawings could easily appear on the pages of the American *Playboy*), even declares, "Maja Berezowska's world of drawings is free from the crude passions of our time. It steers clear of all troubles and fears that harass contemporary man living in an era of wars and upheavals." (These words, I should perhaps add, were *not* written in condemnation of Berezowska.) And the churches, of course, are open: friars in medieval garb walk cheerfully around the streets; religious objects are freely on sale in the shops.

Yugoslavia is much the same, with variations. A Polish joke describes the variations without too much exaggeration: "What is the difference between Poland and Yugoslavia? In Yugoslavia, you can abuse the Soviet Union to your heart's content, but you can't say anything against your own government. In Poland, it's just the opposite." (I remarked to a Pole about the number of jokes I had heard since arriving in Warsaw. "Of course we have a lot of jokes in Poland," he replied. "After all, we have to make jokes for the entire Communist world.") There appears to be more intellectual freedom (or, at least, variety) in Poland than in Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia, on the other hand, appears to have more economic freedom (or, at least, decentralisation) than Poland. A visitor cannot hope to tell how much is sham and how much reality in Yugoslav institutions like the workers' councils; one doubts whether a high-technology society can really be run by such means; but there can be no question that "the free-market socialism" of the Yugoslavs is a reality, and that the Yugoslav planners have devised with skill a system of harnessing the incentives of the market to their central controls.

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Coming straight from a theological society, one is doubtless tempted to exaggerate the pragmatism and tolerance of Polish and Yugoslav Communism. A. M. Rosenthal, the able Warsaw correspondent of the New York *Times*, insists rightly on the importance of the distinction between "freedom of conversation" and "freedom of speech"; the Poles have the first, but not the second. The two non-Communist parties play no serious rôle in Polish politics. In Yugoslavia, the one-party system is firmly entrenched; Milovan Djilas lingers in prison, as a reminder of the sharp local limits on freedom of opinion.

No one can regard Poland and Yugoslavia as libertarian societies in the Western sense. But they are quite as clearly not totalitarian societies in the Soviet sense. "Freedom of conversation" is not everything, but it is a good deal better than nothing. For the Yugoslavs and even more perhaps for the Poles, Communism is essentially a system of economic and political organisation. A good Communist must wholeheartedly accept the proletarian dictatorship, the one-party state, the centrally-planned economy, and the abolition of profit in private property. But that is about all. Beyond that, a good Communist can like or dislike abstract art, as he chooses. He can admire Sholokhov or he can admire Proust. He can think about literature in æsthetic terms and about economics in empirical terms, and he doesn't care much one way or the other if his fellow-countrymen choose to go to church.

With such people, communication suddenly becomes possible again. Even when one agrees with a Soviet Communist, one feels it as an accidental convergence over an infinitely wide abyss; when one disagrees with the Polish or Yugoslav Communist (as one often does), one somehow disagrees in the same language. In the Soviet Union, dogma provides the exact answer to everything. Poles and Yugoslavs are more ready to admit that they don't know all the answers and that existing formulas don't solve all conceivable problems. The Soviet Union dwells by the mystique of a single truth. In Poland—and to some, though a lesser, degree in Yugoslavia—one feels that the Marxist truth coexists with other truths. In Polish universities, the Marxist historian lives side by side with the Catholic historian and the bourgeois-progressive historian. The Soviet Union is still a totalitarian society—far more amiable than in the days of Stalin, but no less dogmatic and ideological. Poland and Yugoslavia are semi-pluralistic societies. The Polish and Yugoslav Communists take open pride in the fact that their Communism is far more free, pragmatic, and humane (i.e., less Communistic) than Communism anywhere else.

Poland and Yugoslavia forced this observer to concede the feasibility of what I had always previously supposed to be impossible—"liberal Communism." Both countries combine a Communist political and economic structure with a considerable measure of intellectual, cultural, and religious freedom. The question remains whether these countries represent a fortuitous concatenation of circumstances not likely to be reproduced elsewhere—or whether a non-fanatical, non-totalitarian Communism of the Polish-Yugoslav sort could possibly be the direction in which even the Soviet Union itself might be moving.

POLAND and Yugoslavia gained their present positions by quite separate roads. Yugoslavia achieved its own liberation during the war. Tito had his own army and his own secret police and was consequently in a position to defy Stalin when Soviet demands became too exorbitant. Having suffered from the heavy hand, Yugoslavs undertook after 1948 what they proudly describe to-day as "the first experiment in de-Stalinisation." Djilas subsequently carried the logic of Titoism to a point unacceptable to Tito, but this should not obscure the fact that Tito himself carried it to a point unacceptable to Stalin. In Yugoslavia to-day, Tito seems oddly to have receded from the picture. He remains first in war and first in peace, like George Washington; but he spends more and more time in Brioni, less and less in Belgrade; and the Yugoslavs do not ceaselessly speculate about his moods and whims, as the Russians do about Khrushchev and the Poles about Gomulka. One feels that some sort of constitutional order is evolving in Yugoslavia, and that the present mixture of freedom and dictatorship can survive a good deal, including even the death of Tito.

Poland won its autonomy in another way. Occupation by the Red Army restricted its range of political alternatives in the years after the war. But Stalinism produced a reaction as definite in Poland as in Yugoslavia: the word "revolution" in Poland to-day refers, not to the imposition of Communism in 1945, but to the revolt against Stalinism in 1956. That revolt

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brought the astute figure of Gomulka to the top; and Poland to-day is the expression of Gomulka's two remarkable deals—one with the Soviet Union, the other with the Polish people. These details were the almost inevitable result of Poland's geographical and cultural location. On the one hand, geography committed Poland to the East: even anti-Communist Poles were forced to accept the imperatives of Poland's strategic situation. On the other, culture committed Poland to the West; its tradition was one of feeling and spontaneity; even pro-Communist Poles were forced to accept the imperatives of Poland's cultural inheritance. This balance of imperatives defined Gomulka's task —and opportunity. With regard to the Soviet Union, Gomulka traded the independence of Polish foreign policy for a measure of latitude at home, especially in policy towards the intellectuals, the Catholic Church, and the peasants. Within Poland, Gomulka offered the people areas of relative freedom in exchange for their acquiescence in Communist rule and a pro-Soviet foreign policy. This equilibrium of unwritten treaties provides the basis for Polish autonomy—conceivably a basis less shaky than it sounds.

Obviously Poland and Yugoslavia have attained their forms of liberal Communism in quite special ways. Will they remain unique? Or (as the Poles think and the Yugoslavs hope) may the Soviet Union itself evolve in a liberal and pluralistic direction?

I HAVE described the Soviet Union as essentially a theological society manned by a collection of true believers. I have suggested that the unquestionable progress in the last half-dozen years towards greater personal security and greater personal comfort may even have strengthened rather than weakened the dogmatic and ideological character of Soviet society. Yet are there no fissures in the Soviet structure? Are there no grounds to substantiate the Polish conviction that "the eventual logic of de-Stalinisation is de-totalitarianisation"?

The most significant remark made to me in the Soviet Union came from one of the wiliest and most experienced of Soviet writers. He said, "In the U.S.S.R., the grandfathers and the grandsons have more in common than either has with the fathers." By this he meant that those who grew up *before* the Revolution and those who grew up *after* the Second World War have a mutual rapport, a common sympathy and understanding, as against those who grew up between the wars.

The older Western assumption had been that the children in a totalitarian society, having been exposed to systematic indoctrination from the cradle, would form the most orthodox, rigid, and hopeless group in that society. One remembers the character of Gletkin in *Darkness at Noon*—the complete Soviet man, steel-willed, fanatical, and indestructible, who took over from the older interrogator and finally broke Rubashov down. As time went on, we supposed, the Soviet Union would consist completely of row after row of Gletkins. Now Koestler's sketch was essentially right for the generation between the wars. The present Soviet élite consists of middle-aged editions of this monolithic Soviet man. But what none of us allowed for is the now evident fact that the sons and daughters of Gletkin are turning against their father. The monolithic style of life bores them, estranges them, leaves them disturbed and rebellious. They are reaching out for beauty and gaiety, for speed and risk, for autonomy, privacy, and self-expression. Instead of the revolution devouring its children, perhaps the children may end by devouring the revolution.

THE character of this revolt needs to be defined with precision. It certainly is not a revolt against Communism. Soviet youth to-day are Communists—in somewhat the sense that the youth of Europe and America to-day are Christians. Communism is for them the framework of life and belief. But it does not seem for them, as it did for their fathers, a living and militant faith to which every decision must be sternly referred. Communism controls their day-to-day activity hardly more than Christianity controls the day-to-day activity of Western youth. As against the bleak and sterile dogmatism of their fathers, they—or at least a significant minority among them—appear to be reaching out for concreteness, variety, spontaneity. These rebels accept the political and economic forms of life as permanent. Their own political ideas are confused and sentimental. But they chafe under the moral and æsthetic dogmatism of the all-out Communist ideology. In one way or another, they want to break the mould.

"Young people are curious," Khrushchev himself admitted during his American tour.

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> Many of our young people hear about religion, about God, about the saints, about church ceremonies, and they have a curiosity about it. Even if each one of them goes to church only once, they're so numerous that the doors of our churches would never close. The feeling of curiosity is very important.

It is indeed very important, and it is characteristic of Khrushchev as a dictator that he both perceives the mood and concedes its significance. Again and again, one notes the contrast between the complacent certitude of the middle-aged and the open-minded enthusiasm of the young. When an established scholar pompously scolded Alfred Kazin for not having written the right things about Theodore Dreiser, a student approached Kazin after the meeting and said in English, pointing to the older man, "I hope you don't think we are all as illiberal as he is." When Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic gave Stravinsky's *Sacre du Printemps* its first Moscow performance in a generation, the stalls (filled with the New Class) were restrained and perfunctory in their response, but the galleries (filled with younger people) gave Stravinsky as well as Bernstein a wild and continuing ovation. At the American Exhibition, young artists clustered with excitement around the abstractions, while Khrushchev, with customary delicacy, said they looked to him as if they had been painted by a little boy urinating in the sand.

Youth and old age—against middle age. No one knows what is going on beneath the surface in Soviet culture; but every once in a while something rises into sight which suggests ferment underneath. Thus the veteran critic K. Paustovsky, a "grandfather," wrote in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* last May a scathing critique of official Soviet notions of literature. He scornfully attacked the convention of "the sickeningly sweet happy endings."

> We are lucky that Leo Tolstoy managed to write *Anna Karenina* before this tradition appeared. He did not have to "take a bow" to anyone, even the publisher; he could allow Anna to break up her family and pass out of life from purely private, and, consequently, impermissible considerations.

Compare this with the contemporary Soviet insistence on "positive" achievements—

> . . . taken with such obstinate persistence, that one would think one should have to drive home to every Soviet reader the advantages and superiority of our system to the capitalist system in the 42nd year of our revolution, mind you!—and as if we, ourselves, feel doubtful about it and are astonished, taking it as an illogical miracle.

Soviet literature is afraid to write of suffering and sadness "as if all our life must go on under a sky of sweets and sugar." As for the degradation of the Russian language, so scintillating, melodious, and picturesque—

> Are we jealously preserving this language? No! On the contrary, it is being increasingly soiled, twisted, and reduced to a garble. We are threatened with the danger that pellucid Russian will be replaced by an impoverished and lifeless language of bureaucratic red tape. Why have we allowed this nauseating language to creep into literature? Why do we admit to literature and even to membership in the Writers' Union people who don't know Russian and care not a fig for it?

Paustovsky's conclusion was concise and arresting: "It is, perhaps, that we shout so much and so loudly about truth in literature exactly because we lack it."

We were unable to persuade any Soviet writer (except Ehrenburg) to discuss with us the issues raised by Paustovsky. But clearly Soviet writers must discuss these issues among themselves. And evidently Paustovsky speaks not only for those who, like himself, can remember the European culture of pre-revolutionary Russia but also for men and women in their twenties yearning for forms of expression and creation which would express, not official ideology, but personal experience.

THE restlessness among the youth represents, I think, a great hope in the Soviet Union for evolution in a pragmatic and pluralistic direction. And, though consumer goods *per se* will work no miracles, one cannot help feeling that the movement towards a consumer society will in the long run begin to erode the dogmatic monolith. There can be no question that Khrushchev has committed his country to the consumer-goods merry-go-round. The critical question is whether the present Soviet capacity to build national power at a high rate through the efficient concentration of talent and resources can survive the transformation into a consumer society—or whether the consumer-goods passion may not upset the system of priorities and sap the single-minded intensity with which the Soviet economy dedicates itself

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to the building of national power. One detects already a new deference to consumer motives. Two-tone Soviet cars crowd Moscow streets. Television aerials soar over Moscow apartment houses. Russian girls queue up for Italian-style Czech shoes. The director of Moscow television, commenting on the possible exchange of programmes between Britain and the Soviet Union, observes (with almost the sense of priorities of an American network official), "Perhaps football matches between the Russian and English teams at Moscow Sports Stadium could be shown. If there were a summit conference that too would be of interest. . . ." In the end, the commitment to the consumer-goods merry-go-round may fix the Soviet Union, as it has already fixed the United States.

All these represent possibilities, not predictions. The Poles keep up their own spirits by pretending that the Polish example is having "great impact on the Soviet Union." One is sorry to report that, in our visit to the Soviet Union, we never heard anybody mention anything going on in Poland. Still, the one thing above all indispensable for the victory of the Polish-Yugoslav tendency is the relaxation of international tensions. The resumption of the cold war would snuff out the inchoate burgeonings in the Soviet Union, jeopardise the incipient liberalism of Poland, and probably freeze the state of affairs in Yugoslavia.

Khrushchev said many disingenuous things in the United States; but almost the least disingenuous was the one for which he was most widely attacked—that is, his speech before the United Nations. Obviously Khrushchev would prefer disarmament on terms which would weaken his side least and the other side most; so, it must be admitted, would we. Yet his desire for a *détente* may well be genuine. It seems to me a grave error to suppose that there is no "real difference" between Stalin's Russia and the Russia of Khrushchev. Stalin *required* international tension: only an overhanging external threat could reconcile his people to his savage interior tyranny. Khrushchev, by diminishing the interior tyranny, diminishes at the same time the need for external crisis. To try to deal with Khrushchev with policies developed in the age of Stalin—which, until very recently, has been the West's idea—appears to me wrong. I would guess that Khrushchev deeply wants a *détente* if only because of his superb confidence that the Communists will win the peaceful competition hands down in every area of human activity. No one in the West should seek a *détente* which would endanger any vital Western interest. But surely one of the strongest arguments for a *détente* is precisely the fact that relaxation might give the forces of pluralism and tolerance a chance to dissolve the ideological dogmatism of Soviet society.

THE great value of a few weeks behind the Iron Curtain is to remind oneself of the treachery of abstractions. Both the Communists and ourselves have divided the world too glibly between the "democratic" or "capitalist" and the "socialist" or "Communist" camps. We have all assumed that these platonic essences are more "real" than their confused and imperfect approximations in the concrete experience of contemporary societies. We have thus accepted the mystique of Either/Or; and, in endowing essence with greater actuality than existence, we have committed what A. N. Whitehead used to call the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness." The great need of our times is liberation from the fanaticism of abstractions and a new concern for the empirical realities of life.

We are intermittently aware of the fact that the platonic essence of "capitalism" does not correspond to the many mutations of a ceaselessly changing economic system. Only just recently, Henry Cabot Lodge, addressing both Mr. Khrushchev and the New York Economic Club, casually discarded official American dogmas about the sacred and irrevocable character of free private enterprise. The difference between the early capitalism analysed by Marx (and, Mr. Lodge implied, analysed with some justice) and "our modern system of economic humanism" is as great "as the difference between black and white." He went on to announce, in defiance of a generation of business oratory, that Americans lived in a "welfare State" and that business prospered "at the same time that the Federal Government, in ways large and small, pervades our lives." Most of us agree with Mr. Lodge that capitalism is not a fixed orthodoxy or a single structure; it is a name which covers a variety of political and economic institutions.

We must equally begin to take note of the gap between the abstract model of totalitarianism and the fumbling and fallible reality. After the war, in a world shocked by the horror of Nazi concentration camps and fearful of the fanaticism of Stalinist Communism, it was easy to accept the image of totalitarianism as an all-

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encompassing, all-devouring, *pure* expression of absolute power. George Orwell and Hannah Arendt developed this image in memorable literary terms, and for a moment we all succumbed to the notion that movement into totalitarianism from ordinary society involved a change of phase and a transvaluation of all ordinary human motives.

Yet human nature is too obstinate, various, and elusive to be efficiently mastered by any technique thus far devised short of physical obliteration. Of course, this is an available technique; and madmen like Hitler and the senile Stalin attempted precisely that. But they could never kill enough people to make their nightmare societies safe, and in the end they died themselves. The dictator who stops short of murdering all oppositionists, corruptionists, and apathetics must permit them to live; and, as soon as he permits them to live, he terminates the purity of his totalitarian experiment and admits dangerous strains of normality into his society. Normality seems a weak and sketchy emotion, but, given time, it can split a monolith as ivy can split a block of granite. We supposed for a moment during the war that Nazi Germany was the climax of totalitarian purity; we discovered afterwards that it was honeycombed with intrigue like a Byzantine court and that it actually mobilised less of its economic potential than Great Britain. We supposed for a moment after the war that Soviet Russia was even more pure and absolute a totalitarianism than Nazi Germany; but since the death of Stalin it has been divesting itself of much of the irrationality which we considered its essence; and we are discovering now that its power, while frightening enough, is not supernatural, and that human motives somehow survive and even prosper. And Poland and Yugoslavia confuse analysis further by presenting examples of what appear to be functioning, non-totalitarian, semi-liberal Communist societies.

We must transfer our attention from essence to existence. Life is far more complicated than our categories. In this century, for example, "capitalism" has survived only by strong injections of "collectivism," and "collectivism" has survived only by strong injections of "capitalism." We must reject the mystique of Either/Or, and begin to lead the world back to intellectual sanity. We Westerners have a predominantly pragmatic and pluralistic tradition; we become dogmatists and monists only in times of crisis and hysteria. When we abandon the empirical approach to life, how can we hope to restrain others from turning into raving ideologues?

The question of the future is whether sensible Western policy can contribute to an evolution in the Soviet Union along lines already traced in Poland and Yugoslavia, or whether the tradition of infallibility is so profound and terrible in Russia that the Soviet leadership can never emerge from ideological madness. The Soviet Union is presently "dizzy with success." But given time, given peace and growth in the West, the forces of human normality, weak but irresistible, will perhaps begin to have their effect. Even in the Soviet Union, one finds still hanging in Tolstoy's country estate, in the calm and lovely Yasnaya Polyana, a picture of William Lloyd Garrison, the American abolitionist, inscribed in flowing hand: *"Liberty for each, for all, and for ever!"*

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ART

Bernard Berenson

By Sylvia Sprigge

He died on October 6th. Those of us who were fond of him are still getting and writing letters about his last years and days. He was laid in his coffin in the library he had built and made at I Tatti, the morning we, over here, voted. Those last days (in the words of Alda von Anrep, for many years the librarian at I Tatti),

> he stayed in bed because he had developed a fever which made his mind very clear, so that he wanted to say many things and he could not, because the articulation of his mouth was blocked by the swellings. . . . In that sense he was like a prisoner and it was really tragic for him and for Nicky, he never was able to say a word to her before he died. But he did stand everything without complaint, without impatience, really he was great and admirable. And the end came so serenely that we felt no tragedy about it. . . . In the evening there were present in his bedroom: Nicky who was holding his dear hands in hers, Bessie Berenson, the doctor with his hand on his heart to feel its last beat, the priest of the little parish church who had given the absolution and the extreme unction, Gioffredi with Fiorella, Alda von Anrep, and all the servants. The room was dimly lit up by a shaded lamp and the silence . . . it could have been a scene of Rembrandt. . . . His face in the majesty and silence of death was so spiritualised, so superior, so noble, that it consoled all of us who saw him for the last time. He looked like one of those medieval monks whom you see on tombstones on the floors of some ancient church. He had been wrapped in a thin, ivory-coloured woollen scarf which covered also his head. It had the same colour as his face of which you saw only the part that was not disfigured by the swelling, and the beauty of that face was sublime, as if he was seeing another world and another light.
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> So he was lying, a small, ivory figure on the big table in the library where the fireplace is, all surrounded by flowers, with the cross painted by Vechietta at his head and candles burning all round him, With the sun pouring in through the windows and flowers, flowers everywhere. . . . Half of Florence came to honour him, and innumerable people from other towns in Italy.
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> The funeral was a real pageant to remember, with the *gonfalone* of the town of Florence, of the Province and of Fiesole, with the dignitaries and standard-bearers in their costumes. . . . At the head of the procession were the brothers of the confraternity in their white vestments and caps, bearing the torches, and when they reached the church the end of the procession was still in front of I Tatti. In that procession there were walking queens and washerwomen, dignitaries and the humblest people altogether. The coffin was carried to the church by B. B.'s own people, and the ceremony in the little church was accompanied by the Gregorian chanting of the seminarists from Fiesole. . . .

After the service the procession turned back from San Martino downhill and uphill, the four hundred yards to I Tatti, to the small chapel inside the garden where he and Mary Pearsall Smith were married in 1900, and where they will lie side by side. And sometime in the spring of 1960 Harvard College will enter in the legacy of his house, his art treasures, his library, his gardens and farms, and Harvard will have its second art centre outside the State of Massachusetts: the first, for Oriental studies, at Dumbarton Oaks, the second across the seas on the hillsides of Florence, for "the humanities."

I remember one day in Cambridge, Mass., looking up some of Harvard's endowments. The list is splendid, but it includes some rejections of premises and palatial quarters, because of insufficient endowment. Berenson's great concern once his legacy had been accepted in 1936 was to build up a sufficient endowment to assure the presence of at least half-a-dozen students "of the humanities," if possible from several countries. How he dreaded the vision of thesis-writing students, so dear to the heart of Art faculties in Germany, in the U.S.A., and alas, in England, slaving away, after his death, seated at the pale oak desks in the upstairs library. Perhaps it won't be like that. Perhaps, by some propitious arrangement, the house and garden will retain something of his extraordinary personality, and a stay there will still be a voyage into time, giving those who win the privilege the new dimensions and insights and values which seemed to fill the house for us.

Not that hard work was ever mocked. The day was so arranged that anyone staying had a clear four hours or more in which to read or write and the whole place was conducive to work in those hours to oneself. But one always

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caught a warning in the air—to beware of getting lost in professionalism, if one might so describe it. Berenson had not much use for professional philosophers. He used to call them *phisolophers*, and he shied like a colt if they became what he called *metafuzzical*. Ardent mediævalists were apt to be described (even before their arrival) as *muddy evilists*, and too solemn students of heraldry, astrology, or other symbolisms in the visual arts, as engaged in *ico-nonsense*.

Needless to say, if the mediæval or iconography or philosophy scholar was a lively human being, intelligent, articulate, able to listen as well as talk, all prejudice was laid aside and the visitor was remembered for all time by name and face and nationality. Of course there were people, young and elderly, whom the magic never touched, who went away with a sour bee in their bonnets that had missed the honey-dew. But they were very few. Berenson, too, misunderstood and mishandled some of his visitors, but very rarely. There was nothing infallible or inhuman about the home and household he had created at I Tatti. His prejudices were strong. There was nothing to prevent you from presenting your own, properly clad and not in argumentative rags.

It was good to read, the Sunday after he died, that last sentence in Sir Kenneth Clark's tribute to him, in one of our Sunday papers: "I owe him more than I can say and probably much more than I know; and I can only try to repay this debt by holding on to the values which he maintained for so many years."

BERENSON'S prejudices annoyed and still annoy some people. They question the triple pillars of classical Greece (with all that lay behind Greece in the Orient), classical Rome and the Italian Renaissance as the mainstay of the platform from which Berenson adjusted his sights at history, art, and literature. A Present without a Past was unthinkable to Berenson. He read all Sartre and thoroughly appreciated the writhings of the existentialists.

To make a *tabula rasa* of the past was, to him, a profoundly uneducated pastime, a tragic activity, mainly indulged in by those who are spiritually or financially at the end of their tether. I think he had had too close an experience of Russian Nihilism in his youth, not to recognise its new forms in the twentieth century. He knew all about the people who spilt paint on the floor, bicycled over it and then sold the mess for a few hundred pounds, and the others who shot their paint-tubes like pistols from a distance, at the canvas, and then joined up parts of the resulting daubs and invented a title, and of course he knew about the army of painters who work with rulers, compasses, and set-squares.

Berenson was not very interested in realism in art. What he caught, and what one caught very quickly when one was with him in a gallery, was the poetry in a picture: it might be the genius of a likeness in a drawing or a painting, a likeness to someone you might never know, but a likeness much greater than mere representation—a respect for the human face, excellently caught by a great draughtsman. Or it might be a colour poem, a tone poem in a picture not very distinguished for its draughtsmanship. Or it might be the space, the well-being of good composition. What he meant by decoration, composition, style, realism, illustration, he has clearly defined in *Aesthetics and History*, and it would be impertinent here to even try to condense those definitions. They are already so condensed that *Aesthetics and History* is a book to take like pepper, never neat, lest you suddenly choke.

All this turned gallery visits with Berenson into an adventure, even if the gallery were housing something as far removed from Berenson's world as a Picasso exhibition. It was where he stopped that mattered: how swiftly he passed by the vulgarities and clevernesses and, making for the pottery, suddenly identified the native Catalan at his ancient labours. Berenson's visual energy was enormous and infectious. It can become an awkward energy. It adds to the enjoyment of life. It adds another private world to those we carry in us, giving a name, a memory, and an atmosphere to a room, a landscape, a person's movement of the head or the hand or the body, long before a word has been spoken.

BERENSON'S money-earning work demanded visual energy. To be a master of attribution in a period of painting long past and (as he found it) in a chaotic muddle, demanded constant visual study. But, as the years went by and the hours of leisure vastly increased, Berenson, like most gifted men, made nonsense of the contemporary cry: "What will the workers do when the working week is reduced to twenty-four hours?" It is, of course, not a question of what one will do, but of what kind of a person one will be, how live, how enjoy, how be enjoyed.

His plans for his own reading, for travel, for the reception of his guests, for the embellishment of his house, his library, and his garden, received the same careful attention which his early labours had received, and were therefore crowned with a like reward. I don't think he ever doubted that there was an art of living appropriate to the kind of person one is, and he

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was naturally drawn to men and women from whatever walk of life, who had also, in their own fashion, a design for living both in the present and in the past.

He was not often brought into contact with young scientists working in a new and limited language. He knew they exercised a fascination on politics and on contemporary art. Nevertheless he would not despair of contemporary art. There was only one young English art critic of the contemporary scene he read with pleasure, and that was John Berger. There were two contemporary Italian painters he was fond of. One of them was Renato Guttuso. Both John Berger and Renato Guttuso might be described as somewhat devoted adherents of the Soviet way of life. It was part of Berenson's gift that he was able to enjoy what is abiding and not what is transient in such artists of the pen and the brush. Guttuso painted a landscape, a very small wooded one, for one of Berenson's birthdays. Berenson treasured it and kept it in his study.

Somewhere Berenson wrote that the way back to artistic achievement will lie in the hands of the craftsmen. Somewhere, some time, the "know-how" would come into its own again, and the deadly patronage of the dealer and of the exhibition organisers and their *art crickets* would be swept away like the leaves of yesterday.

I SUPPOSE I enjoyed more of this kind of Berenson's conversation than many a more important friend, because writing about Italy when I lived there, included writing about the five post-war Biennales in Venice. I don't think I should have written any differently about them had I never met Berenson, but it was certainly a comfort, when one had got into hot-print-water, to discourse with one so knowledgeable about periods of decline in the arts down the centuries.

I never found that the contemporary scene was evaded at I Tatti. Its more hideous aspects were taboo, so that conversations based purely upon newspaper and radio revelations, as so many conversations now are, were unknown in that Tuscan villa. Nor could one easily speak of the latest play or film or ballet, seeing that Berenson never went to any outside entertainments. One could always speak of them in a larger context in which more than mere preference or mere criticism was conveyed. With books the matter was different. Until one eye gave out, Berenson read what his favourite reviewers in the journals of England, Switzerland, France, and Germany offered as their preferences. Then he would order the books, but often only on hearsay from a good friend's letter or conversation. The ill-read at I Tatti were at a disadvantage—and I was certainly one of them. The well-read (who were, more often than not, English) enjoyed Berenson's reminiscences of authors and books quite as much as his current reading. He knew which books had formed and were forming his own character and opinions and he expected others to be similarly aware of the early and current influences in their lives.

When the Bomb was mentioned, and it inevitably was, Berenson expressed doubt that it could annihilate the whole show, though he never doubted it could annihilate most of what he cared for. He would suggest that generations of active gifted people have lived under the shadow of Vesuvius despite the total destruction which befell Pompeii, and likewise in Lisbon, despite the Lisbon earthquake. He would "talk Bomb" if he had to, but he suspected those who forced him to it of political motives, or of obsessive apprehension about quite different matters.

He knew Italy as few foreigners have known her. There was a complete absence of condescension in his relations with Italians which was good to see. He could have left Italy when Mussolini declared war against the United States from the balcony of Piazza Venezia in 1941. When the American Ambassador of the day failed to persuade him to leave, he commended him to the care of Ciano, but when Ciano was executed there was no one left between Jew-hunting Nazis and their victims in Florence except, by an extraordinary piece of luck, an anti-Nazi German consul. He urged Berenson to go away, and although he knew where he went into hiding, never told.

When it was all over (at least in Tuscany) in 1944, Berenson wrote in his diary:

> I am glad I withstood persuasion and pressure to return home, and that I stuck it through in Italy. The six years of the war went a good way to complete and perfect my acquaintance with Italian mankind. It has been worth while. . . . Nowhere else have I encountered like generosity and self-sacrifice.

He had spent those years delving into history, memoirs, and the current rumours available in the local Press; the resulting book, *Rumour and Reflection*, is a storehouse of political insight and prophecy. The peace, uneasy as it was, brought him possibly the most wonderful decade of his life, and the chance to travel, in several new books, over far wider reaches than he had ever covered before.

The curtain has fallen upon an unforgettable scene, meals and talks and walks which those who knew Berenson will cherish for a lifetime. All one can do is to wish well to the experiment about to be initiated on that hillside at Settignano.

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A Conversation

"It's strange to be the sole survivor of an epoch," said Berenson, after dinner the first night. "I have begun to take myself seriously which I never did before." We had been invited by telegram to stay for two nights. We talked about mutual friends. During the war, C. said, one of them had been made very unhappy by his wife's infidelity. His tone was reproving. Berenson thought it quite justified. "Could you be faithful to someone who talked like a Bishop?" he said to me. "Can anyone be faithful to anyone, anyway? Fidelity belongs to an era of slavery."

It is snowing to-day; through the grey sleet we can see the mountains covered with snow and the cypresses; in the wind they sound like the rustling of the sea. Berenson, at ninety, is wonderful looking. Tiny and very spruce; he moves in a kind of upright sprint in the manner of someone who is accustomed to being the centre of attention; is very clothes-conscious; wears narrow, black suede shoes. I noticed him looking at my old leather walking-shoes with displeasure. He appears almost hairless except for a white beard and for someone with such a slight figure has a very thick neck. He uses his sensitive hands to stroke his face in mock anguish when subjects like psycho-analysis crop up; when talking to a woman he likes to hold her hand or stroke her hair. He told us that his visual sense was such that in his youth after his first visit to the Prado he could remember in detail every picture he had seen. Talking of Ezra Pound a guest maintained that he had been mad from the age of ten. "It has always been the excuse made for him by his friends," said C. "You can see it in his handwriting," the lady went on. "I see vulgarity," piped B. B., "a great deal of ignorance and some appalling bad grammar, but no madness."

At dinner, we had fresh peas from the garden. Italy, Berenson said, was a very productive country with practically all the natural resources that she needed; like the beggar who when he dies turns out to be a millionaire. We talked about the Roman paintings. Everyone admired the Villa Livia fresco now in the Terme Museum, Rome. Like a vision in a dream, someone said. "Some of them are like old Chinese wall-papers," C. said. Berenson agreed but, laughing, stated they were not quite as good as that. He insisted that the Romans were completely uncreative, that all the painting had been done by Greeks, some of them were copies from Greece executed by Greeks; as Pompeii was originally a Greek city and anyway the Romans considered painting to be an unworthy occupation. The Villa of the Mysteries was a copy; the execution was inferior to the conception; copied about the time of Augustus. C. was surprised. "Always remember," Berenson stressed, "when the execution is inferior to the conception you may be sure a copy has been made." He then stated that it was only at the beginning of the 19th century that painting became a respected profession. C. disagreed, referring to the great painters of the Renaissance. Berenson said that they were esteemed as geniuses all right, but artisans all the same. You would find that Michelangelo, for example, would never have been seated at the Pope's table. Many of the great painters would never have come face to face with their noble patrons. C. countered with Velasquez. "What a snob he was!" said Berenson. He thought Anatole France was a very great writer and that he would have a revival. But he did not think much of any of the present French writers, except Montherlant. Gide had capitalised himself fully during his lifetime, there was nothing more to be squeezed out of him. Valéry, of course, everyone praised. A man indifferent to success or notoriety. He was very against Virginia Woolf's Diaries and did not think any writer should be so obsessed about their work; he criticised her for harping on her sales all the time. He thought it was wrong to have published them leaving out so many personal passages. "She ought to have remained a critic," he concluded, "she was so very good at that." Maugham was dismissed as not worth a serious discussion, never having written a memorable phrase. His essay on Zurbaran was utterly trite.

The first night they kept trying to make C. open a full bottle of whisky that had been put beside him. When he declined, Nicky said, "But we had been told you had become a very heavy drinker and so we arranged to have something strong in the house specially." She had also heard that he had become exceedingly fat but admitted, "You don't seem so fat to me." "It's just the jowl," said Berenson. "If you were a few inches taller no one would think of you as being fat at all. It's your head which looks out of proportion."

The routine of the day is that we all foregather for lunch at one o'clock, having been left to our own devices till then. But it is not easy to remain in bed as the servants disturb us, bringing clothes that have been pressed, preparing baths, stoking the fire. C. gets up early and goes to work in the library. After lunch we retire; congregate for tea, or, as C. puts it, "go on parade again" at a quarter-to-six; disappear again at seven; dinner is at quarter-to-nine; we are summoned to it by a gong.

Robert de Montesquiou was mentioned. "What a dear fellow," mused Berenson. "Such a brilliant talker, but failing as a writer. A true aristocrat, confident of the superior quality of his mind and the distinction of his appearance. What a stimulating companion he had been! but garrulous and exhibitionist in a social gathering, demanding all the attention. What a wonderful profile he had!" . . . It was through Montesquiou that he had met Proust.

"What has been your impression of your morning?" Berenson addressed me, as I sat next to him at lunch. "Too many books in the library." Everyone looked across in dismay. "So many one wants to read and so little time," I explained. "I really have achieved something with the library. I shall be leaving something behind that is really worth while." Then he laughed. "It provides anyone with standard intelligence with what an American would call, 'a good liberal education.'" C. talked about Petronius and got so excited that he did not eat his food in time and the fruit had to be passed round while he was a course behind. When he had

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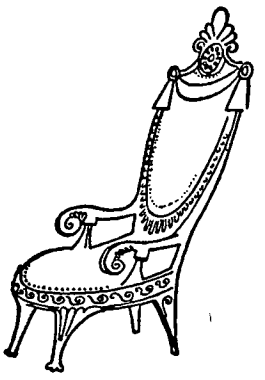
finished an Italian guest exclaimed, "Very interesting!" "Aren't you proud," said Berenson, "of having a husband who is as well-informed as he is frivolous?" I don't think he liked the course being held up. Again I was admonished for reading Art books. "I have never read a thing about painting all my life," said Berenson. But he recommended Burckhardt. "You'll be learning Chinese soon," he suddenly said to me with disgust. "Do you like to be a door-mat to your husband?" Anticipating my answer, he concluded, "Then you don't love him."

On our last evening C. told Berenson he should write his memoirs, reminiscences of personalities, as he possessed such a gift for bringing people to life. "I have very little concentration left," he replied, "and the little that I have is going into compiling a catalogue of Italian painting." He paused. "I have so little time left and it is to be in four volumes. So I must think of nothing but that. And it exhausts me so to write." When it was suggested that he dictate, he said, "I can't understand how anyone can work through dictation, it is a most uninspiring medium. I need someone to draw out the memories. It is as though they were at the bottom of a well and needed extracting." That he could not do himself. Someone asked whose works, it was thought, would be read in a hundred years. Portions of Proust would survive, but there was a great deal of him that needed weeding out. What he has to say about the time factor was quite unique, said C. Berenson said that he had met Proust in Paris with Montesquiou, whose voice Proust even imitated. A peacock's screech, he said. Shrill and high-pitched. C. said that many of those who had met Proust had not taken to him very much. Was there something repellent about his appearance? He was very dirty, Berenson agreed. Wore no tie; and dirty open-necked soft collars; and *dans le monde* sat in a corner not speaking but watching everybody, and then later he took up with such boring women! What Proust had done could have been a great deal better.



The tragedy of the present was that the world was run by journalists, he went on, who, being culturally ignorant about the past, failed to comprehend what was happening in the present. Even politics were governed by journalists; diplomats did not count any more. Just journalists and revolutionaries. . . . Too many people wrote; and they wrotely solely for the present; no one gave a thought for the future. . . ." If he had unlimited money he would leave a trust for writers *not* to write. He had no use for Eliot now. A terrible humbug. Auden was no good either. Is Sanskrit such a wonderful language as it is reputed to be? C. asked. Some maintained it was more expressive and melodious than Greek. "Horrible language," said B. B., "mathematical and spoken like a chant."

How he hated metaphysics! *Meterfussers,* he called the metaphysicians. He thought the Flaubert cult a great exaggeration. That reading him was "like swimming in turtle soup." He had read *Education Sentimentale* many times and still had the impression it could have been reduced to a long short-story. *"Il tire par les cheveux."* But he liked *Bouvard et Pécuchet* the best. We asked him if he liked Verrocchio's *David* as much as we did. But he did not share our enthusiasm. Described it as being "equivocal." Cellini's *Cosimo* was very much praised. Michelangelo's *David* was a "hobbledehoy." There had been more balderdash talked about painting in the last fifty years than ever before; if a hundred years elapsed without another word being said on the subject, it would be no loss to the world. How over-praised the late Renaissance had been! The absurd reverence for Raphael, Leonardo, and Angelo, out of all proportion. The Douanier Rousseau was a complete fraud. But Van Gogh was a great painter.

C. went into his room to say goodbye for the last time, and told him that when he had stayed at I Tatti in the 'twenties he had been anti-culture. He had felt that I Tatti was the dead hand of the past on creative young people. He was more influenced by Huxley, Lawrence, and Joyce than by Pearsall Smith and Berenson. But now he had come round to see that "I Tatti was infinitely more precious than anything *avant garde* which had such a short life."

B. B. said, "Culture is like a match burning in infinite darkness."

C., "Why do people always want to blow it out?"

"They don't want to, they just have to blow."

C. asked, "What are your plans?" "Trying to finish my catalogue of Italian paintings, though each night I go to bed wondering if I will be here the next day. . . ."

"The snow has melted. Look, B. B. And the birds are singing. It's spring to-day."

Berenson: "This bed is where I do my singing. Peep. Peep." Five minutes later we left.

Barbara Skelton

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NOTES & TOPICS

Latin at Oxford

You asked for a note on the recent discussions over compulsory Latin at Oxford and Cambridge. May I use the form of a letter, which will show that these are personal, not official, views? And may I use note form? And may I stick to Oxford?

(1) The underlying fact is that there is no relation to-day between the University's entrance requirements and the scramble for places. To come up to Oxford a boy (and for "boy," read "boy or girl," unless I differentiate) must gain admission to a college. The greatly increased number of State Scholarships and County Grants since the war has made it possible for far larger numbers of young people to contemplate the possibility of coming up to Oxford. College scholarships were always highly competitive: places are becoming more and more so. Since the examination, either for a scholarship or a place, is mainly in the subject which the candidate proposes to read, the schools feel themselves more and more forced towards early specialisation. In this world of cut-throat competition, the University's entrance requirements appear an anachronism. Responsions looks like an obsolete hurdle distracting a highly-trained sprinter. What is increasingly happening in many boys' schools (there is a real difference here between boys and girls) is that a boy is allowed to specialise from a very early age in the subject he is to read at the University and related subjects, and then, having won his scholarship or place, he finds himself forced to spend six months cramming up sufficient Latin or Greek, or (though this is less frequent and less complained of) Mathematics to get through Responsions. He naturally regards this as a complete waste of time and resents it as an intolerable imposition.

(2) In this situation the Hebdomadal Council set up a committee to examine the whole question of entrance requirements to the University. Almost immediately a group of persons (many of them members of Council) put forward a resolution asking Council to promulgate a statute making German, or Russian, alternative to Latin or Greek. This was carried by five votes in a house of about five hundred. Council then brought forward the necessary statute which was opposed by the only constitutional method, the moving of an amendment to adjourn the matter *sine die*. This amendment, which I seconded, was carried by nineteen votes in a house of about six hundred. This means that the matter has to be shelved for four terms and meanwhile the committee is getting on with its work.

(3) The issues were very confused. It is not true to say that all scientists wish to abolish the Latin/Greek requirement (although the majority do). Nor is it true to say that all the old are on one side and all the young on the other. On the Arts side, there are many classics who regard with horror the indignity to which Latin is subjected and hold that poor Latin is worse than none. There are further divisions between reformers of different views. Some of those who voted for the amendment did so because they thought the attempt to equate German and Russian with Latin and Greek was absurd. Others who did so were voting against any change; others wanted other kinds of change.

(4) I am glad that the statute was rejected because I think the whole question of entrance requirements to Oxford needs radical thinking. Grave and fundamental issues are involved. I cannot accept the idea that this is a purely domestic issue and that Oxford can decide what its various Faculties require of their entrants without considering the effect of these requirements on the country at large. Oxford and Cambridge stand for educational ideals and values, and if they declare that they have no interest in anything but special competence in one discipline this will affect the education of children at every level. A university's function is to be the intellectual conscience of the community. It must not accept the idea that the customer is always right and that education is to be tailored to individual needs and temporary pressures. We all of us accept as an ideal that every child should know how to read and write, although we have to accept, in practice, that some children cannot master this skill. We have to think out what is our ideal for our ablest children, and what skills we expect to find in a well-educated man or woman.

(5) The question as I see it is this. What are the essential intellectual tools which a boy should have acquired before he comes to the University which will give him intellectual liberty: the power to choose what intellectual paths he will follow there and in later life? My own view is that the basic requirements are ability to use language and ability to deal with quantities. Whatever other subjects may be demanded by Faculties, the University should, I think, require of all its entrants a pass in English Composition, Latin, and Mathematics, demanding a high standard in the first and a modest competence

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in the two latter. I know that it is said that some persons gifted in language cannot manage Mathematics and that some mathematicians cannot master language. Hard cases make bad laws, and all universities have methods of dealing with them, by "graces." Personally, I have not met many able persons whose "genes disqualified them" from Mathematics or languages, and would only say that the latter would not be helped by the substitution of German or Russian for Latin.

THE PRIMACY OF LATIN as the Arts subject *par excellence*, parallel to the primacy of Mathematics for Science, does not rest on the superiority of Latin literature. The case for Greek, certainly, and Italian, possibly, is stronger here. It rests on the plain historical fact that Latin was the common tongue of educated Europe for centuries and that incapacity to read Latin makes it impossible for anyone to attempt to become a serious student of history or literature. But the value of Latin does not lie only in the doors which it opens. No living language can replace it as a tool for teaching the analysis of meanings and ideas, and of the relation of word in sentences, and no other language, living or dead, can replace it as a basis for acquiring other modern languages. I am not saying that all persons who have learnt Latin write well or that all persons who have not learnt Latin write badly; but the average standard of competence in the use of English during the centuries in which translation from and into Latin and free composition in Latin were the main occupation of schoolboys was far higher than it is to-day. I connect the decline of Latin in this country (and its virtual disappearance from schools in the United States) with the increasing illiteracy and verbosity of so much modern expository writing. A boy who has done elementary Latin up to the age of fifteen or sixteen can at the time of his preparation for, and even at his entrance to, the University still choose his road. He has not cut himself off at eleven or twelve from the possibility of changing direction. Apart from this he has possibilities of personal enrichment beyond his academic subject. The scientist who becomes interested in the history of his subject, who develops an interest in the arts or in theology, or who discovers a taste for reading our earlier literature, or who wishes to teach himself a romance language, or who becomes interested in local history will find that his elementary Latin can be brushed up and used. The argument that boys who get no further than O-Level Latin do not and cannot read Virgil in later life ignores the manifold uses of Latin as the essential instrument for the understanding of our human inheritance and the handicap which the wholly Latinless person labours under.

(6) Nobody fears that the classics are going to die out and that Latin and Greek will cease to be taught in our public schools and famous grammar schools if Oxford ceases to require Latin from its entrants. But what will happen in our smaller grammar schools? Will they be able to preserve a "classical side" if Latin ceases to be a normal part of the curriculum for children of "grammar-school type"? I have had many letters from headmasters saying that once Oxford and Cambridge declare that Latin is not part of the intellectual equipment of anyone aiming at a university education they will be unable to resist pressure from parents who "don't want their children to waste time on a dead language." They will be unable to support a classical specialist to teach a few children, and the child who might have discovered a vocation as a classical scholar or as a mediæval historian or as a literary scholar will never discover that vocation. If we destroy Latin as the basic linguistic discipline for all children aiming at a higher education, we make nonsense, in my view, of our claim to offer equality of opportunity.

WHATEVER DECISIONS ARE REACHED about Latin as an entrance requirement, the Arts Faculties at Oxford will continue to demand Latin from their entrants. I cannot regard with equanimity the prospect of the Arts Faculties at Oxford drawing exclusively from the public schools, the larger grammar schools, and the Roman Catholic schools, for whatever happens in our maintained schools generally Roman Catholic schools will continue to insist on Latin. It is because I believe in equality of educational opportunity that I believe Oxford should stand firm on this point. I want every boy or girl who is capable of coming up to my University to have had the chance to choose the Arts, and have become, at least, aware of the possibility of understanding their inheritance as Europeans. I want them to have learnt to understand, through the discipline of translation to and from an ancient tongue, something of the nature of language as an instrument of communication, and to have learnt by that exercise how to use the riches of their own language which has been so marvellously enlarged and subtilised by its domestication of Latin in every age.

Helen Gardner

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The Future is Behind Us?

On the North Atlantic Left — By D. W. Brogan

TWICE in this century, the old order of capitalist exploitation or the free enterprise system (you takes your choice) has been in imminent danger of collapse. The rulers of the Western world were, in each case, discredited by a great and disastrous war that they could neither prevent coming nor end quickly. And waiting in the wings, was the historically nominated heir, democratic socialism. It was hardly necessary to make a take-over bid; the old firm was bankrupt, the receivers were ready and eager. Yet in neither case has the bankruptcy taken place, in neither case has the legitimate heir come into possession. Of course, there is a highly and increasingly successful heir that *has* taken over, in Russia, in China, and which, I am ready to believe, may soon take over in other places. But in the highly industrialised, proletarian Western world, the prophets have been deceived. Nowhere, except in the doubtful case of Czechoslovakia, has a highly industrialised, technically advanced society become socialist by the free choice of the workers. Everywhere, "capitalism" has shown astonishing powers of adaptation and recuperation, and in 1959 the prospects of what is now the traditional "Left" look bleaker than they did in 1919 or 1945.

All over Europe "democratic socialism" is in retreat or is stagnant. And defeated three times in a row, the British Labour Party that cast itself in 1945 with such confidence not only as the rightful heir of the radical tradition in Britain, but the natural leader of the resurgent Left in liberated Europe, asks itself with distress, in some cases with anguish, what has gone wrong, and ponders the possibility that, as in France, Germany, Italy, it may stay excluded from effective power until the hopeful days of 1945 (not to speak of 1919) are not even a memory.

The alliance, inevitable and right between, "the People" and "the Movement" that, given the class distribution of Britain, was bound to give political power to the party that embodied it, has shown less and less vitality. "We brought them out of the slums in 1945 and now they desert us," the reported *cri de cœur* of a zealous woman party-worker, sums up the disillusionment of so many *militants*. And it doesn't do much good to blame it on TV, hire-purchase, the reptile Press, "Americanisation," for if the workers are as susceptible, gullible, corruptible as all that, the hopes on which the Movement was founded, the religious faith in the People that moved the founding fathers to their apostolic task seem dubiously valid to-day. What is the use of singing *England, Arisel* to a class that insists on sitting crouched before the telly?

Nor is it only in Britain that this disillusionment is visible. In France last year, after the Gaullist triumphs in the referendum and the elections, the same disillusionment, the same resentment was visible. *"Le Peuple"* (hypostatised and adored even more uncritically than in Britain) had let its champions down. In Germany the Social Democrats have been battered into abandoning their historical doctrinal basis and their historical programme to a degree that would have astonished Eduard Bernstein. Only on the Scandinavian edges of Europe has the retreat been halted.

ACROSS THE ATLANTIC, THE SITUATION is not quite the same. For one thing, the belief in an inevitable Socialist triumph has been a private religion of a minority since, at any rate, the first stabilising years of the New Deal. For another, the nearest approach to a party of the Left, the Democrats, has not been electorally so unfortunate as have the parties of the Left in Europe. For another thing, "America is different," better or worse, but different. But the Left in America, contemplating the indestructible father image of "Ike" and beginning to fear that even with Ike gone the Republicans may win the Presidency in 1960, is not much more optimistic, not much more confident that it has the effective political answers than has the Labour Party or the disorganised and demoralised "classical Left" in France. The unease is reflected in many

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ways but in none more interesting and relevant to our present discontents in Britain than in the privately circulated memorandum by Professor Arthur Schlesinger Jr. that is now being pondered by amateur and, I hope, professional politicians in America.*

Of course, the differences between the British and American situations are such that a mere translation of Professor Schlesinger's diagnosis and prognosis would be highly misleading. Yet the problems facing the Left in each country are sufficiently similar to give this tract a special value for us. And even the differences have their value. Just because the situations are far from identical, comparison may have a therapeutic value. What are the important differences? Size, geographical diversity, power of autonomous national action make it not scandalous, not a defiance of good sense and good morals that the American political system differs widely from ours. And perhaps misfortune will stop the British Left from beginning its inspection of the American system with the arrogant: "Why haven't you got a Labour Party?" and lead to substituting "You haven't got a Labour Party, why?"—which is not at all the same thing.

It would be a waste of time to discuss the federal system, the separation of powers, the Civil War, the cessation of mass immigration, the race question in the South (and the North), all of them themes essential to the understanding of the American political system. It will be more useful to look at the assets and the handicaps of the Left in each country, in 1959, accepting the fact that great differences are bound to exist but trying to narrow the discussion to the question of how in the two different systems the Left can attain political power and why it may fail to do so.

A FIRST AND BASIC DIFFERENCE IS suggested by the use made by Professor Schlesinger of his father's cyclical theory of American political movement. There are epochs of Movement (and reform), there are epochs of tranquillity, torpor, "normalcy" (to quote President Harding). Over a long period, you can see a constant pattern of "progress," of more social legislation, of more egalitarian taxation, of more social and racial equality. But there will be slack water as well as high tides and to ignore this, to expect "the People" always to be up to the highest level of *your* estimate of its duties and needs, is to be let in for unnecessary emotional hardship—and to be blinded to the possibilities of action when the tide does begin to flow again (as the younger Schlesinger now thinks it is about to do in the United States).

But the British Labour Party has found and will find it difficult to accept the Schlesinger premiss, for "the Movement," if not the Party, was and is emotionally driven on by the belief that it has been given by history the task of socialising Britain. The American Democrat even if (as some Democrats are) he is as far to the left as Mr. Hugh Gaitskell intellectually and as Mr. Aneurin Bevan emotionally, has good historical reasons for not thinking that he is bound to win (although on paper in 1959 his chances are a lot better than those of the Labour Party here). He can accept with more or less resignation the "conditions of national weariness produced by two decades of unrelenting crisis." He may think (as I do) of the Harding-Coolidge-Hoover era as an interlude in the Roosevelt-Wilson-Roosevelt-Truman forward march. But he doesn't forget that the interlude occurred, lasted a long time, had important consequences, and was not "unnatural," a defiance of "the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God." To the Labour intellectual, for instance, it is in my experience an axiom that the Labour Party (whether you date it from 1900 or 1906 or 1918) was *bound* to replace the Liberal Party as the party of the Left. It had received the Mandate of Heaven, as the Chinese used to put it. Now this doctrine (which should be distinguished from the similar but not identical Marxist doctrine) ignores the rôle played by *luck* in the replacement of the Liberal Party by the Labour Party. The first war, the Asquith-Lloyd George feud, the coupon-election of 1918 which broke, for the first time in many places, as in Scotland, the traditional Liberal hold, wrecked the Liberal Party, made way for the Labour Party as the official opposition—and transferred many of the assets of the Left to the various brands of Tories who have, with brief intervals, governed this country since 1916 and look like going on governing it for a long time to come. Less attention paid to the Webbs, to the new party constitution, and more to a realistic (and necessarily gloomy) assessment of the party assets would have saved many a heartbreak.

They would also have saved the party from an illusion, briefly plausible in 1945, highly implausible before and after, that the British people (especially the English people) had been converted to Socialism. The victory of 1945 did make such a belief plausible or, at any rate, not fantastically implausible. That the Labour margin in votes (as apart from seats) was not great enough to make it safe to assume that the great heart of the People was sound, was ignored

* *The Shape of National Politics to Come*, by Arthur Schlesinger Jr. This memorandum has not been published for general reading, but I have Professor Schlesinger's permission to quote it and to use it as a springboard for discussion.

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in the euphoria of victory. "We are the masters now," cried Sir Hartley Shawcross in a moment of candour. (Sir Hartley's own career ought to be studied by believers in the inevitability of Labour victory. And it is a pity that Earl Jowitt is not around to advise the party he joined so dramatically in 1929.) The American Democrats, with far more reason to count on victory than the Labour Party has ever had, have been saved from the illusion of certain and proper triumph. They knew that they had formidable, vigilant, and not necessarily eternally wicked foes to keep an eye on. They learned (for example in the Supreme Court fight) that they could not always count on the People. They knew, or the wiser of them knew, that there was a possibility that instead of being heroic climbers struggling bravely and successfully up the mountain side, they were at times riding on an escalator that might stop even if it did not reverse itself. That the conversion of the English people to Socialism is still to be effected—that it will take a long time—that it may prove impossible—these are truths that need to be pondered. That 1945 was no mandate for the creation of a truly Socialist economy is a bitter truth to be digested. Instead of asking "Why haven't you Americans got a Labour Party?" the Labour Party here should be asking, in as cold blood as can humanly be expected, "Why have we got a Labour Party?" For the rise, up to its present level, of the Labour Party has prevented the growth of a genuine, militant, propagandist Socialist Party. I don't believe that such a party would have converted England, but it would have lessened confusion and might have been an effective ginger group on the Left of an effective Radical Party. I do not expect loyal Labour Party members to accept all this, but if they force themselves to consider this thesis, they will be less likely to regard their successive defeats as being in some way against the nature of things. They may be part of the nature of things, like the decline of the Socialist Party in the United States.

In this tract, Professor Schlesinger warns his party colleagues of the Left against fighting the battles of the 'sixties in the terms of the 'thirties. In 1952, many Democrats (as I can testify) were just as distressed at the ingratitude and forgetfulness of the People as Labour Party zealots are in 1959. But the Depression, the New Deal, the Hunger Marches, the Spanish War are long in the past. At the moment, the "System" as it was simply called in the Socialist Glasgow of my youth appears to be delivering the goods and the public has been conditioned, both by the Labour Party and the Democratic Party, to assess the worth of political and social systems very largely in concrete material terms. (The first use that I can remember of "You never had it so good," as a political slogan, was from the Democrats in 1952.)

If the present system continues to deliver the goods that the mass of the nation wants (however wickedly they have been seduced into wanting them), the parties of the Left will have a hard job in competing simply on the "anything-you-can-do-we-can-do-better" basis. They will have to offer something different.

What Professor Schlesinger suggests that the Democrats offer is a return to the concept of "the public interest" instead of the present offer to cater to a slightly different set of interest groups from those catered to by the Republican Party. In a way, Democrats like Schlesinger have it easier than their Labour Party opposite numbers in this country. For the Eisenhower-Humphrey policy of pursuing price stability by federal "economy" is vulnerable to attack if, as Schlesinger suggests, the popular tide is beginning to move. In a great many fields, schools, medical care, housing, research, only the federal government has the resources to meet the growing public needs of "the affluent society." American taxation (even with the capital gains tax thrown in) has enough loopholes worth stopping to make possible a popular policy of federal expansion and one of the great critical areas of American development, the South, needs federal money so badly that even the die-hard States Rights politicians may be seduced in no very long time. The general interest, the common welfare can be translated into attractive programmes by any party that has accepted the case made by Professors Schlesinger and Galbraith that the public sector is being starved till it is dangerously anæmic. We have not the abundance of resources or, in some fields, the visibly pressing needs (the Labour Party can take a lot of credit for that) that can animate a "progressive policy" in the United States. I am ready to bet that some form of "socialised medicine" will be a popular campaign issue in the United States inside the next five years unless the American Medical Association reforms itself. (*My* opinion, not necessarily Professor Schlesinger's.)

There is a negative as well as a positive side to the concept of the public interest. We all know that the Labour Party, as an effective political instrument, is the child of the trade unions. We all know how important was the shift in allegiance of the miners from the Liberals to Labour. On the other side of the Atlantic, the case is altered. It could be held that the present rich and potent American unions are the children of the Democratic Party, of the Wagner Act, and of active federal

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support for unionism. But the contemporary Democratic Party does owe a great deal of its strength to the unions and, indirectly, a great deal of its funds to them. But it is not so closely linked to them as the Labour Party here. Yet Professor Schlesinger sees the danger of the complete identification of the Democratic Party with *any* visibly sectional interest. It is not a question of graft-ridden unions like the Teamsters. It is complete identification with any visible and not necessarily popular interest group. (The Republican Party suffers a lot from its identification in the popular mind with rapacious business.) Thus the American public (and voters) were not as upset at the "attacks" on Labour, identified with the recent labour legislation on the unions, as were the union leaders who might have been wiser to have accepted something stronger than they liked to avoid what they actually got. In America, it is probable that the number of union members is never going to grow, that the change in the character of American employment from "blue collar" to "white collar" has set a ceiling on the numerical strength of the unions.

Maybe the same thing is happening here. The Labour Party, to its own long-term discomfort, is deeply attached to a declining union and a declining industry, miners and mining. It will have to be careful to avoid being committed to the maintenance of what is visibly a declining sectional interest which has the added political disadvantage of being the only directly productive, non-monopolistic nationalised industry. But barring some economic catastrophe, the growing points of industry in America and here will not automatically provide recruits for a "working-class party" of the old type. A Labour Party that is only a Labour Party, that cannot somehow appeal to the spreading middle class, is doomed to cease to be a party of government, doomed to be forced to be right but impotent (and any Liberal can tell his Labour friends how frustrating that can be).

SCHLESINGER wants the Democratic Party to concentrate on improving the "qualitative" side of the national life. In the United States, for reasons I have given, it is easy to suggest ways in which the federal government can act to improve the national life. The obvious needs and the obvious means are more numerous. But the quality of local life in Britain could do with investigation and amelioration. The steady sucking of resources, of men and money, into the London area, the centralisation of our intellectual life (the change of title of *The Manchester Guardian* is no minor symptom), the drabness of local government, the pettiness of much of its spirit—these are fields in which the Left might pioneer, even if it meant running against vested interests inside and outside the party.

For—and this is the final adjuration of Professor Schlesinger's tract—the traditional Left must not assume that it will win because its opponents are condemned either by history *or* by stupidity. The new society that is growing up around us in America, in Britain, all over Western Europe should not be studied with a predetermined bias that it must go the way the pioneers of the Labour Party or the zealots of the New Deal foresaw. It may be that the present balance of power between White House and Congress will continue in a rapidly changing age, revolutionised by technology if not by ideology. It may be that the Conservative Party have discovered how to stay in office for a generation. Either prospect appals me (and Arthur Schlesinger). Yet neither is an inconceivable fate. And one way of making it certain that this fate will descend on us, is to regard the People as necessarily friendly and won already to the progressive ideals of the intellectuals. They have to be won; they have to be kept won. And they may never now be won to traditional Socialism, but that does not mean that they cannot be won to something more adventurous than any Conservative (or Republican) government is likely to offer them. As Professor Schlesinger reminds us, Woodrow Wilson told the young Franklin D. Roosevelt that it was natural for Conservative government to be in the saddle two-thirds of the time. No doubt the pendulum will swing, but when and why? Will it ever swing to a party as doctrinally muscle-bound as the Labour Party shows signs of being? I don't know.

It is not merely a matter of doctrine in either country. Mr. Richard Crossman has accused the Labour leadership (especially as exemplified in Lord Attlee) of smugness. Without going into the justice of the charge in the case of Lord Attlee, there is justice in the charge in general. I have been struck by the degree to which Labour complaints of the working of the electoral system recalls the surprise and anger of the squires and their ladies with the farm labourers who, when they got the vote, voted Liberal. There is the same note of patronage, of ownership, of being right, knowing it and, worst of all, showing it. I have known union politicians in the United States with the same *de haut en bas* attitude to their members both as members and as voters. A party that can only *resent* TV, frigidaires, the family car, even hire-purchase, hasn't much future and doesn't deserve much future. Rightly or wrongly, the Left has to come to terms with the modern gadget world. It has

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to live with prosperity, with the "cakes and ale" atmosphere in which Tories, now as always, have both preached and practised. Maybe the Cromwellians thought that they had put an end to cakes and ale and had set England off on the track of virtue and progress. Look how the Democrats have underestimated the political adroitness of President Eisenhower while making fun of his syntax and attacking, rightly enough, his dangerous sense of priorities! Left-wing parties are full of clever people who know it and show it. I am willing to call the Tory Party "the stupid party," if I am allowed to remember two things, that its leaders are not a bit stupid and that stupidity is a bond between rulers and ruled that should not be underestimated!

THE LEFT WILL ALWAYS HAVE TO work harder, think harder, fight harder than the Right in Britain and in America. And while it is a great strength to think that history is on your side, if it is, it is a great weakness to think that it is, if it isn't, and to rely on history to do the job for you. The un-ideological character of the American party system that we sneer at, may not be a handicap over the next few years as we fumble with the political problems of the affluent society. The Labour Party may have to repent its doctrinal commitment to State Socialism. Perhaps we should not ask, condescendingly, of the Americans "Why haven't you got a Labour Party?" but of ourselves why we haven't got a Democratic Party? One question is no sillier than the other and one, the second, may be more relevant at the moment, and Professor Schlesinger's tract whether he meant it or not, is written for us as well as for his countrymen.

Monster Films

HAMMER Films, a British company that specialises in horror, have presented the Frankenstein Monster, Dracula, and now, the Mummy in colour for the first time. American companies, although originating these monsters, have, for the most part, confined them to the black-and-white small screen or cell on which they first appeared, a quarter-of-a-century ago. The polish and ghoulishness of Hammer's highly successful films make them the liveliest things in current British film production. The company has, shrewdly, not risked new monsters but applied new technology to an existing teratology. *The Curse of Frankenstein* and *Dracula* were both re-makes of the famous originals, not further adventures of the known monsters. Neither of Hammer's recent productions has original stories: *The Mummy* is based on a Boris Karloff movie (1932) of the same name, and *The Man Who Could Cheat Death* is a version of Barre Lyndon's play *The Man in Half Moon Street*. This is not a lack of enterprise by the studio; it is typical of the special character of monster-making in the movies.

Monsters are long-lived. Monster films made in the early days of sound still go round the scream circuit, earning money years after their reputable competition has been forgotten. All the classics of horror have triggered off chains of sequels, so that the monsters stay among us. For instance, the original Mummy was followed, during the 1940s, by *The Mummy's Hand*, *The Mummy's Ghost*, and *The Mummy's Curse*; finally, even Abbott and Costello met the Mummy. The Frankenstein monster and Dracula, as well as the less important Wolfman (who has never had a feature film to himself), have all been through widely-distributed repeat appearances. No wonder a science-fiction writer like Cyril Kornbluth wrote: "If I wanted to make some money in a hurry and didn't care how, I'd write a 'monster' story." Kornbluth's reaction tells us something about monster movies which you cannot learn from the film critics. It is twenty years since the bug-eyed-monster phase of science-fiction. Hence the confusion film (and book) reviewers make between science-fiction and monster-lore is a source of embarrassment to serious science-fiction fandom. Almost all so-called "science-fiction" films are, in fact, monster films, with their iconographical roots in Mary Shelley and Bram Stoker, not in 20th-century technology (which is the core of modern science-fiction). Hence the best name for the *genre* is, probably, Monster Films.

The monster film is inseparable from revivals, sequels, re-makes. In no other form of film-making is this degree of Byzantinism acceptable: in Westerns the motivation of the hero and of his enemies has changed. But the monster film is constant: Frankenstein is still a fanatical scientist who trespasses on God by creating life; Dracula still takes his blood from the neck, never from the bank; and Charis the Mummy lumbers around strong-arming Egyptologists under the same old age-old curse.

Monster films are written down and written off by regular film critics, with complaints that such films are repetitive, lack decent stories and, anyway, are sickening. It is true that good stories are not what you go to monster films for; story lines are usually nonchalant and discontinuous, studded with islands of horror, set-pieces, ex-

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pected by the audience and flinched at (or screamed at) when they do happen. It is pointless to expect classic forms of suspense to be built up by hints and implications while the monster is delayed, as in literary ghost stories. The reasons for making and witnessing monster films is the visibility of the monster, the damage to persons and property, the suggestion of rape as the monster carries off the girl. Unlike the discreet forms of ghost story, shock, astonishment, fear, are the product of the monster parade. A spokesman for Hammer said recently that their films were intended "to have exactly the same effect on the audience as the Big Dipper. . . ." Characteristically, *The Mummy* is interesting only when the Mummy is on-camera—heaving out of the swamp, slithering into the padded cell, bursting into the library, staring red-eyed at the girl.

MOVIE-MONSTERS TAKE TWO FORMS: the man in a monster suit, sticking pretty close to the human image (though not quite); and oversize invaders from the wonders of nature (such as giant ants or spiders). It is the human-image monsters, however, which carry the greatest significance. They always have a statue-come-to-life gait and bearing (the nimble Dracula excepted). The men in the make-up department and Christopher Lee have done the Mummy very well. Its walk, stiff after millennia of entombment, experimentally flexing its limbs as it goes, is a brilliant extension of the original lumbering walk that Karloff created; the dried hollowness of the bandaged body, a powerful crust, is creepily conveyed, too. It is cratered with deep and unbleeding gun-shot wounds and when a victim stabs at it with a spear the weapon bursts dustily and unhindered through the torso and out the back. It is worth noting how close the Mummy keeps to Mary Shelley's original description of the Frankenstein monster:

> I saw how the fine form of man was degraded and wasted; I beheld the corruption of death succeed to the blooming cheek of life; I saw how the worm inherited the wonders of the eye and brain.

She described, too, how the monster's "yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath."

The Man Who Could Cheat Death is about how a man who keeps young by means of gland operations fails to celebrate his 105th birthday. There are some gruesome bits along the way, especially that "laboratory humour" Hammer films are so good at (see *The Revenge of Frankenstein*), but the final dissolution is the thing. Dorian Gray-wise, the man's hair falls out in tufts; his skin creases and discolours; his muscles collapse—yanking his features out of shape; and his flesh decays until he is like one of those degraded figures horror comics used to describe: "his body a mass of black rot," with "small spongy chunks dropping away with each stiff staggering step."

ATTEMPTS TO ACCOUNT sociologically for monster films always make them symptoms of "a sick society." The analysts attempt to attach peaks of monster-film production to whatever events in the political calendar especially worry them. Thus, the first peak (1932–33) was on "the eve of Nazi-ism"; the second peak (1943) was during the "dark days" of World War II; and the third peak (now) is treated as evidence in advance for "ban the bomb" people with monsters as portents of radiation hazards. It is true that some recent monster films have made ionising radiation the agent of dreadful change (for example, *The Incredible Shrinking Man* and *The Amazing Colossal Man*) but, in pre-Atomic films electricity produced similar results. After all, something is needed to produce the monster, a direct curse, or an alternating current. The fact is, sociological explanations of this kind fail to recognise the historical fact that there has always been a spontaneous human taste for monsters, for the more-than or less-than-human. St. Augustine felt they had to be "allowed for" and explained them as part of God's inexplicable plan of the world.

The physical details of injury, malformation, and decay are paraded before us in monster films as in a medieval Dance of Death. What the monster-film does is play with death and disintegration, probing into the fearful territory around and below the healthy and intact human image. This is done despite the British censor who weakened the climaxes and central interest of both *The Mummy* and *The Man Who Could Cheat Death*. We are barely allowed to glimpse the Mummy shattered by a shot-gun volley, and the accelerated onslaught of disease and decay in *The Man Who Could Cheat Death* is jumpy and curtailed. As it is, Hammer Films make three versions: the longest and roughest for Japan; then a version for America (a bit shorter); and, finally, gentlest of the lot, a British version. For instance, embalming procedures in *The Mummy* are almost gone from the British version. The British censor, though lately admitting the existence of sex, continues to obstruct popular imagery of death.

The emphasis in these films is on the body as a package, which can be opened. What we find fills us with awe and horror. Death both repels and rouses, and monster films exploit the ambiguities of repulsion and curiosity. The *genre* is repetitive precisely because death and

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malformation have to be presented in rigid conventions, or disgust would overhelm curiosity. These films are an imagery, both fantastic and highly conventional, of what happens to flesh, of the fate of being a body.

Lawrence Alloway

Humanists and Scientists

*A Last Comment on C. P. Snow**

THERE is an order of priorities. As Bert Brecht put it in the *Dreigroschenoper*: *"Erst kommt das Fressen, dann kommt die Moral...."* Literary intellectuals who criticise the scientific revolution should remember that were it not for the improvements in medical care and nutrition that science has brought, only half of them over thirty would still be living. The major results of science in those parts of the world in which it has been applied, are firstly, that there are many more people alive, and secondly, that they live much longer. Try to imagine yourself back in a situation, say two or three hundred years ago in England, in which you and your wife could only hope to rear to maturity about half the children she bears. Would such a situation be borne by anyone who is not provided with a crust of insensitivity to human values which we find difficult to imagine, but which must, one supposes, have been general among our ancestors who found their most amusing Saturday afternoon entertainment watching public hangings at Tyburn? A critic of Snow has written of "the old, spontaneous, intuitive faculties, the direct sensuous awareness of the external world in immediate contact, before perception was clouded by the abstractness of modern rationalisation." One could take this, perhaps, from a shepherd or a gamekeeper; but remember that the ordinary scientist sits at his laboratory bench looking perhaps through a microscope at the near miracle of an egg turning before eyes into a larva, and an adult creature, holding in his hands two tiny scalpels and wondering "what in the world am I going to do to this creature to persuade it to reveal to me just what it is up to?" Or he watches flecks of light on a screen or tracks in a cloud chamber, and knows that he is observing the most intimate details of the minutest fundamental constituents of the material universe. When some literary type, from a furnished lodging in Bloomsbury, raises his eyes from producing a definitive edition of Ossian, and starts talking about direct sensuous awareness of the external world, just how seriously do you expect the practical scientist to take him?

I was once fortunate enough to spend a few weeks in a country which was living with a craft civilisation. Ten or fifteen years ago in the northern part of Nigeria, the appurtenances of modern industrial civilisation had hardly penetrated. Their domestic utensils were pots and gourds which had been shaped and decorated by individual craftsmen, each utensil a personal production of one man's creative sensibility. You could watch the dyers painting elaborate patterns on their cotton materials and steeping them in indigo. Almost every single article the ordinary people used was beautiful. Two of their incised gourds stand in my living-room now, and one of their dyed materials forms a hanging behind my bed. If those people were given the choice, and they are given it, of living twice as long and not suffering from trachoma, filiarisis, sleeping sickness, yellow fever, and the rest of it, can anyone seriously argue that they are wrong in the choice they have made, to take the life and try to let the pots follow? I am a hundred per cent on their side. The answer seems to me to be so obvious as hardly even to be interesting.

Where I criticise Snow is that I feel that at an important point in his argument he becomes too subtle. The obvious answer to the "two-culture" dilemma is to teach some science to the humanists and some of the humanist subjects to the scientists. Your good academic throws up his hands in horror. "What you can teach in this way," he says, "will be a mere superficial potted version of the real thing." (For instance, Sir John Cockcroft, the new Master of Churchill College, Cambridge, discussing Snow's thesis in ENCOUNTER, used almost exactly these words.) But isn't it the case that everything that is taught in all university courses in all subjects under the sun is only a potted version of the real thing? The "real science" is what you start doing when you take your Ph.D., or even perhaps after you have taken your Ph.D., when you launch out on the sea of ignorance on your own. The real humanist culture is what you engage in when you write your first novel, or poem, or volume of criticism. The instruction of students cannot be intended to do anything else but give them a potted version of the past, which is incomparably too great by now for them to come into personal contact with it in individual detail.

One usual argument, which Sir John Cockcroft repeats, is that it is better to let students of science pick up some of the humanities from their contemporaries in the "informal conversations" which are one of the most important parts of a university education. I don't for a moment deny the value of these conversations, but aren't you asking young, inexperienced students to carry out for themselves a synthesis which the professionals are simply too frightened to tackle? For instance, it is a well-known fact that analytical Cubist pictures, which were the first to make a radical break with the laws of perspective worked out in the Renaissance and to incorporate views from several different viewpoints simultaneously on one canvas, appeared at the same time as the rise of physical theories expressed in four dimensions. It is almost inconceivable that there is no connection between the two phenomena, one in the field of art and the other of science, even if the connection is only the very general one that both are expressions of the

* We have received Sir Charles Snow's reply to his critics, and it will be published next month.—*Ed.*

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Zeitgeist. But even supposing that the ordinary science student discovers the existence of this fact, where can he easily lay his hands on a book that discusses it in a sensible way? Poets such as Day Lewis and Empson make almost as much use of modern scientific imagery as did Donne, and Auden frequently explicitly discusses scientific theories and the general implications of the scientific outlook. I can only think of one or two books, such as Henn's *The Apple and the Spectroscope*, in which any attempt is made at a professional discussion of the relations between poetry, the visual arts, and science in our time. I don't see how the ordinary science undergraduate can be expected to do this job for himself. There is almost nowhere he can turn for assistance.

In my opinion, the humanists are simply funking a job that they ought to be tackling, and so, to a rather lesser extent, are the scientists. But whereas there are quite a lot of books written by scientists about humanist subjects, by, say, people like Whitehead, Russell, Sherrington, Schroedinger, Bernal, Haldane, Huxley, and so on, where are the equivalent books in which humanists have attempted to make similar syntheses? Take the whole ambivalent attitude to machinery and science of artists like Max Ernst, on the one hand, or Max Bill on the other. Who has written a book to try to tell scientists what they're up to? Humanists, I think, ought first of all to be doing a lot of learned spade-work, writing books at a high academic level which are addressed to an ideal audience which is supposed to be equally at home in art and in science. Their attitude ought to be that if that audience doesn't exist, they will have to invent it, and in point of fact, they will have to train it. That is their second job. We, in university departments of science, ought to be under continual pressure from our humanist colleagues to allow them to come in and give courses of lectures to our students. Perhaps we ought to be pressing them more strongly than we do to be allowed to go and give lectures to their students, but after all, as I have said, we have written a lot of books for them. The humanists haven't written the books, and if anyone mentions lectures, they write off in advance their own achievements as "mere potted superficialities."

The provision of courses in the humanities for scientists, and in science for humanists, would be comparatively easy to arrange within our present educational system. It is, in my opinion, the only way in which a foundation can be laid for a bridge between the two cultures. But at more advanced levels (say the last two years at the university) a satisfactory system will only appear when we take in hand the reorganisation of our method of educating specialists. At present we in practice encourage a good deal of specialisation, but feel guilty about it. As knowledge becomes more and more voluminous, specialisation becomes increasingly unavoidable. Some years ago (*Political Quarterly*, 1943) I made a suggestion about the best way to handle it; and Sir Eric Ashby, in his *Technology and the Academics* has recently put forward much the same argument. The ideal way to educate specialists is, surely, to allow them to be as specialised as they please, but to force them to realise the ways in which their specialised knowledge affects human affairs in general. If a bridge engineer had to answer an exam on the influence of rivers and river-crossings on history; if a pest-control specialist had to know of Donne's remarks on fleas and of the influence of pest-borne diseases on the rise and fall of civilisations; if an expert on Renaissance paintings had to know where the pigments came from, the chemistry of egg-media and the derivation of geometrical perspective, they would have to absorb some "general culture," not as an excrescence but as an organic outgrowth of the firm core of deep knowledge which their specialisation should give them. It would, of course, be difficult to organise such training, which requires a lot of personal attention to each student; but it is this sort of education which the best specialists give themselves after they finish with formal instruction, and that I think is sufficient indication that it is the kind really required.

I believe simple, large questions want, in the first place, simple, straightforward answers. I believe the answer is to begin by teaching potted humanities to the scientists and potted science to the humanists. To dress the potted humanities up as a history of science, although perhaps a step in the right direction, is not really enough; it is the humanities as they affect the 1960s, not the 1660s, that are important. I believe that both the scientists and the humanists should swallow their intellectual snobbery and decide that even if they can only get over to their students a little about the synthesis of the two cultures of our time, that is better than getting over nothing at all.

C. H. Waddington

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Ronald Tamplin and George Radda

Prayer for My Children

Trees and stars and stones and creatures
You must love must love my children.

When they were far from me, always
I used to trust you with their fate.

You alone have been always kind
To me. Love them then if I die.

Winter and spring summer autumn
Rivers sweet woods love my children.

Lead them wisely, boy and girl, roads
Of asphalt roads of sand and stone.

And wind kiss their faces instead
Of me. Grass, stone cushion their heads.

Apple tree offer them your fruit
And teach them night of stars your truth.

Teach, warm them kind sun. Your secret
Gold smuggle into their pockets.

All qualities of the living
And the dead teach them; wild lightning

Eagles clouds good ants little snails
And the whole huge world keep them safe.

Man is evil, beyond trust. Fire
Water earth air are truly mine.

To true relatives I turn, earth
Air water fire myself, in death.

Fire water earth air, gods, you must
Love must love the ones that I love.

From the Hungarian of SZABÓ LÖRINCZ

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John Middleton Murry

By Hilary Corke

I MAY as well start right away by saying that this* is an excellent biography. I know reviewers usually reserve this kind of commendation till the end, till they have played around with the thing for a few hundred words and given you to understand between the lines that they knew it all before anyway. But who guesses where we'll have got to by the end? Let me then say hastily that Mr. Lea is sympathetic towards Murry without losing his objectivity; and objective without loss of sympathy—a tricky enough feat at the best of times but doubly so in the case of the present subject. He has a nice dry wit that remains discreet, that eases reading whilst not distracting attention from Murry to his biographer:

> Violet le Maistre, descended on her father's side from Huguenot refugees, and on her mother's from the poet Cowper, was a versatile, vivacious girl of twenty-three, who had inherited, along with the portraits and memorials of the poet adorning her father's house at Oxshott, a lively ambition to paint and write herself. Neither two select boarding-schools in Devon nor even a college of dramatic art had sufficed to stifle her talent. . . .

Accurate and elegant, this *Life* must surely remain the standard work on the subject.

Having said so much, and with Mr. Lea ever prompt but self-effacing at our elbow, what of Murry? H. M. Tomlinson has a passage that goes near to the heart of the matter:

> For prompting sudden and even noisy petulance in those who know him . . . Murry has a special gift. It comes easy to him, but he is blissfully unaware that it is his. It always astonishes him to observe so strange a consequence in his friends. . . . You can see the pain and wonder in his eyes. Anxious, absorbed, pale, and faintly smiling . . . he looks up confidingly, and discovers that we are swearing at him as heartily as though he had lost every train in the timetable for us. And he never knows why. For that matter, neither do we.

Quite. I am swearing at Murry. Heartily. I am petulant, and I may quite probably be noisy. I part company with Tomlinson only over his final sentence. Let us eschew willed ignorance and try to poke about a bit in the roots of our anger.

To slide in crabwise, I recall how I first came across this author. That was at a public school, rather early on; and Murry was served up to my particular form, by a mentor who was caressingly fond of the souls of little boys and eager to stroke and bend them, as a sort of rarified extension of compulsory chapel. There was a Oly Ush about it: and, as one's way is in the years when sensitivity of reaction has not yet been caught up by power of analysis, one felt one was being got at but couldn't quite see how. It will be objected at once, and with some show of equity, that all this wasn't Murry's fault. I am not so sure. Whenever I think of him (infrequently in the past but, after Mr. Lea's tuition, it will be more often), I am afraid it is simply as a great lovable, pointless booby. And —and this is the point—he is of a precise boobydom that flourishes at a public school exceedingly and ought not to flourish elsewhere.

I recall one fellow-detainee in particular. Last week this charmingly intellectually energetic boy would have discovered idea A: this was to be the world's salvation, and salvation would not be lost for the lack of his saying so. One was unimpressed, and advanced arguments. The boy in his turn was unimpressed, if one can use the phrase of one who has entirely failed to listen. So raucously off he rushed to save the world: and now it is this week and he has discovered idea B. He has now "come through at last to true knowledge and final understanding"; and idea B is to be the world's salvation. Unfortunately idea B is wholly incompatible with idea A. One is unimpressed, and advances arguments. Look here, one says, you were wrong about A last week. Yes, he replies, I was wrong,

* *The Life of John Middleton Murry*. By F. A. LEA. *Methuen*. 30s.

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but I was right to be wrong; for without being wrong in precisely that way and fashion I could never have come through to B, which is true knowledge and final understanding. Well, anyway, one says, I was right about A? Yes, he replies, but you were wrong to be right, for look at you now! you have quite failed to come through to B, which is true knowledge *undsoweiter*. Yes, but, one says, B is palpable nonsense. One advances arguments, by which he is unimpressed, if one can use the phrase of one who has entirely failed to listen. Next week he will come through to C, and the world can stop worrying, its future is in able hands.

That isn't *quite* fair, of course, but it is damn nearly. Here is Murry in 1924, writing of himself in the third person, at the precise moment of transition from, say, idea P to idea Q:

> A sense of proportion has descended upon him. He is not going to revolutionise the world. Is there then nothing he can do?

(Well, the reader cries, how about confessing your errors, shutting up, lying low, listening, watching, and taking time off to try and *learn* a little? But no——)

> What he can do is to try to create a nucleus, to gather together a sort of brotherhood, to build a milieu for himself, wherein his beliefs and aspirations shall find an echo and a response.

And so on. Readers will know why people propose to gather together sorts of brotherhoods: and if they don't, they will find a cynical reason or two advanced in my closing paragraphs. Meanwhile, I would only remark two things. First, that this business of becoming righter and righter by being wronger and wronger can only really be appreciated by following the *Life* step by step. Secondly, that it is not unnaturally coupled with an abundance of naïve but colossal self-praise.

> I am the sole remaining representative of our particular integrity, our particular concern. . . . And, I think, experience came more naked and direct to us than to the others [the rest of his literary generation, apart from himself, Lawrence, and Katherine]. To us, there was a sense in which they were all "phoneys." . . . Love meant more to us: we needed it more.

Everything always had to be "more" for Murry. And, also in my closing paragraphs, I shall have another pretty sample of this to transcribe later.

MEANWHILE, LET US TURN for a moment, and by way of parenthesis, to the other two sides of Murry's elect triangle: Lawrence and Katherine. A man may be known by the other sides of his triangle. Lawrence has always seemed to me to be: potentially, one of the very great masters of language; actually, a dreary little pseudo-prophet (speaking only in broad terms and with special reference to the latter part of his life). What in fact one *cannot* forgive Lawrence for is the way in which he wantonly sacrificed that potentiality (given to him, not earned, and one of the very rarest of all gifts) on the altar of pure crude vulgar egocentricity. This is not the place to substantiate such remarks: but here are two little snippets from Mr. Lea, neither (I believe) previously published. Lawrence to Koteliansky, as Katherine was dying of consumption:

> I hear [Murry] is—or was—on the Riviera with K.—who is doing the last-gasp touch.

Lawrence to Katherine herself, under the same circumstances:

> You are a loathsome reptile—I hope you will die.

Nice chap. Well, as we know, Murry and Lawrence were hot competitors in the prophet game. It seems to me that the man who falls for Murry is likely to be a good-seeking man but woolly. But the man who falls for Lawrence (as a prophet, of course, not as a writer)—that man may be good-seeking, too, but it is liable to be all mixed up with envy, anger, our old friend inf. comp., things that blind him to Lawrence's terrible, to his literally terrible, rubbish. I would not trust the man who trusted Lawrence.

How about Katherine? She was one of the sensitive ones. Oh yes. She says so, she says so between every line. Only, one is free to suspect that, as Lawrence was a pseudo-prophet, so Katherine was a pseudo-sensitive: that is to say, her sensitivity was limited strictly to her little self. It is a common enough state of affairs, its technique sufficiently simple. You declare yourself exquisite, and bleed if you are touched. Everybody else ("They") you declare to be coarse, and you kick them very hard, and complain delicately and melodiously about your poor bruised toes. No matter how maddening Murry was, no matter how ill Katherine was, the majority of her letters, both to him and about him, are beyond excuse. So, for example, was her cosy superiority-club relationship with the impossible Koteliansky, to whom she could write about Murry:

> He is like a man under a curse. That is not melodrama. That is why I am determined to remain his friend and to make him free of his own will. Special cases need special methods. There is no general treatment for all. But, dear precious friend, I must not speak against him to you. Yet we both know too much for that to be necessary. . . . Now that I am no longer in a false position with Murry. Now that I am, in

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> the true sense of the words, "free," I look at him differently. His situation is very serious. But who am I to say anyone is beyond hope. . . ?

Dear loyal, modest Katherine! (Is that what Murry meant by "our particular integrity, our particular concern"?) Katherine's "special methods," at the moment of writing that letter, were to insist on living apart from Murry but *next door*; where however she held no communication with him but remained immured on her own side of the party-wall, studying the gospels according to Gurdjieff and Ouspensky (which seems to show she had as thick a head as heart). Poor devil, no wonder he was under a curse! When we knock the icing off Katherine we come down to a vain, selfish girl with a private income who, bursting out of New Zealand with a noddle-full of "emancipation" and "equality" and "rights of women," had, in Mr. Lea's measured and unvarnished words,

> set out in search of "life." . . . One "adventure" had ended in a miscarriage, another in an abortion, a third in an operation for peritonitis which had permanently injured her health, making it unlikely, if not impossible, that she would ever bear a child. In 1909 she had married, for the sake of security, only to desert her husband the following day.

Nice girl. Murry on one side of the wall saving the world; Katherine on the other side saving Murry: neither seems to have brought to his task very suitable qualifications. Consider only that final sentence: "In 1909 she had married, for the sake of security, only to desert her husband the following day." Try it over on the tongue two or three times, at different pitches.

I AM STILL SPEAKING of "life" not "literature," of course. And obviously, compared with those two, Murry is a quite negligible writer, but a saint. Indeed nothing that one hears of Murry ever tempts one to *dislike* him. On the contrary. He attracts protection and the harder he falls the more one longs to run and pick him up again. The fact is, of course (if Mr. Tomlinson will excuse us), that reason in Murry is only the appearance of reason. In reality his "ideas," his "philosophies," his "truths," are only the pseudo-rationalisations of successive emotional states. That is why they contradict one another so blatantly and cancel out, for they are no more than moods in stolen clothing. We are all of us subject to moods. But Murry couldn't just leave them alone and let them ride, he incurably had to present them in the guise of rational logical structures and noisily to try to force others to accept them at that level. If he felt like going and singing down a lane, instead of that he sat down at his big desk and wrote (and how he wrote and wrote and wrote!) a thundering great piece about God and Keats and Sex and Love and Beauty and Lenin and Jesus and Pacificism and the necessity of wearing hand-made boots. He could never keep feeling and reason separate. And the result is hundreds of thousands of words of pure rubbish—rubbish, however, which could only have been written by a very nice man.

AS IF AN ECHO TO THAT (not a last echo, by no means, for there are enough Murry post-humeana to keep the presses rolling for the rest of the century) we have *Not as the Scribes*,* a collection of lay sermons preached to the "sort of brotherhood" that he really did, in the end, manage to found. Well naturally in any community Murry preached the sermons, though one would think that in any average congeries he would have the least to teach and the most to learn. Curious, isn't it, how those who conceive "communities" always conceive communities of which they themselves are the head? I should be interested to hear of someone founding a "sort of brotherhood" in which he personally was to run the errands and wash the bottles. As to the contents of the sermons, I have to report that, contrary to my first expectations, I *did* in the end find a page or two without the word "Love" plastered all over it with the capital letter. Murry seems to have taken out a sort of option on "Love," even to have believed that he had made a corner in it. These are the sort of sentences which hit one if one opens the book casually, anywhere:

> And still perhaps I am no nearer than I was, or have ever been to explaining the mystery of Love. And, of course, I cannot do it. "Love is a revelation," as Marañon said. The utmost I can hope is to be, fitfully and occasionally, the channel by which the revelation of Love is communicated to you.

God knows what it meant to him, or even what he thought it meant to him, other than a great warm glow in the middle of his chocolate cream. He took to writing down *Love* as others take to some mild drug like cigarettes. Indeed all his life he had been doing it:

> Towards the end of her life Katherine quoted in her Journal as speaking to her heart the line:
>
> *Lo! I have made Love all my religion.*
>
> "Who wrote that?" she asked. The answer is that I wrote it, and at this time. I wrote it in a little book which she was not meant to see. She had forgotten that.

---

* *Not as the Scribes*. By JOHN MIDDLETON MURRY. *S.C.M. Press*. 18s.

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In fact the answer is (of course) that Keats wrote it, in a little letter which I dare say Murry was not meant to see, and Murry had forgotten that. It is typical of the whole solemn comic tomfoolery of the set-up that he should have forgotten it.

Here too, in *Not as the Scribes*, is all the old meaningless playing with notions:

> I always feel that Jesus had a marvellous sense of humour, very like Shakespeare's.

We have all come across that. "I always feel that Jesus would have made a marvellous fly-fisherman" [Extract from a Sermon delivered to the Christian Anglers' Association]. "I always feel that Jesus would have been a marvellous shot" [Extract from a Sermon delivered to the Church Sharpshooters' Ring]. And one knows how the (emotional not logical) syllogism goes. Jesus: warm glow. Sense of humour: warm glow. Therefore Jesus, etc.

And here too, still, after a lifetime of it, is the same old blandly charming sense of superiority:

> I could not help smiling, rather ruefully, the other day, when I happened to re-read some of the things I said to the group during the first year here: in particular, about the necessity of their becoming "experiencing natures." . . . I was a very sanguine chap in those days. Now, years after, re-reading my words of wisdom, I could not help wondering how many really understood a word of what I was saying.
>
> What, strangely enough, I had forgotten was that . . . I had been through experiences such as most of the group, and some of you, have not even *dreamed* of. It was very naïve of me to have forgotten that: but I did forget it. And the consequence was . . . because I believed that the members of this community were wiser, maturer, more responsible than they were, that I was deeply baffled and disappointed by what I can only call their ordinariness. . . .
>
> Sometimes, I felt that, by some queer trick of destiny, I had handed myself and all my possessions over to a gang of hopeless spiritual adolescents, who were quite incapable of overcoming their petty egotisms, and simply had no conception whatever of what a life of spiritual struggle can be.

Ho-ho-ho. The hard fact is that Murry sets up to lecture us about life and knows nothing directly of it. There was always a blanket of rainbowy cobwebs between him and anything simple, sensible and there. Indeed, one may conceive of his whole life as an ineffectual milling-about in the effort to pierce that blanket, and of his sermons as sermons to himself. That would be admirable: *for him*. It does not mean that anyone else need be seriously bothered by or about him.

Murry, I suppose, would have knocked off that little lot in half a sitting; Lord knows what his daily stint was. For myself, I find I have writer's cramp, thinker's blink, and sage's syndrome. Anyway, I feel like going off and doing some singing down a lane.

Waugh's Knox

Ronald Knox. By EVELYN WAUGH. *Chapman and Hall.* 30s.

REVIEWERS do not generally care for established authors to change their style, mood, or purpose. The prejudice is easily understandable, born of a laudable affection for familiar virtues, yet largely detrimental to the development of literature. To be told "the same again," again and again, is for many writers an insultingly obtuse compliment which large sales can only very moderately palliate. It is a sort of death-sentence. Something of this sort, I have long thought, happened to Mr. Evelyn Waugh when the clever, but not clever enough critics lined up against *Brideshead Revisited* and later *Helena*. That some of their objections had substance, that our best novelist by changing his mood and his form ran the risk of impairing the near perfection he had achieved from *A Handful of Dust* onwards—none of this, I think, should have prevented them from awaiting the new developments in Mr. Waugh's work with excitement and some measure of trust; they chose rather to be clever about the obvious.

Mr. Waugh is tough; I do not imagine that criticism in general nor the hostile critics of *Brideshead Revisited* and *Helena* in particular alone would have deflected him from his literary purposes; nevertheless, they may have done much to confirm internal doubts which always assail a considerable writer when he is moving towards new things. The critics had tried by their acclaim of *The Loved One* to type-cast Mr. Waugh for the mordant court jester; he retreated from their demand into the shadowy desert world of Crouchback. The exuberance of *Brideshead* and the originality of *Helena* had been refused, so now he gave us "the same again" but thinned, chilled, and soured. Mr. Waugh's war novels, in fact, follow the pattern of his great pre-war novels, but they are deprived of light, dry and brittle, near to desiccation; even so, because he is so masterly an artist, they are never less than good. Had he travelled along the road suggested by *Brideshead* he might, as the critics were quick to point out, have fallen

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into many lapses of taste, but the road would not surely have led across quite such a desert tract. For a brilliant moment, of course, he emerged into the crazy lights of *Gilbert Pinfold* and told us the English Kafka tale of how it had all happened; but now it seems to me with this life of Ronald Knox, so competently, even lovingly carried out, Mr. Waugh has returned to the desert.

All this preface is a little to appease my own disquiet, for it has long been my wish to review a work of Mr. Waugh whom I admire above all contemporary novelists; and now I find myself committed to the review of a book, that for all its competence and high intention, seems to me dull, at times even empty.

Why is this biography of Ronald Knox so grey in tone, why does it impart a sense of wet afternoons, soggy, ill-prepared meals, vague aches and pains too feeble to locate, yet nagging enough to destroy all pleasure or serenity? Does the fault lie with the subject? There are times when Mr. Waugh seems to suggest that Knox was temperamentally depressive. I remember my only glimpses of him, an isolated figure walking around Christ Church Meadow on cheerless, leaf-strewn, windy October afternoons, and I can believe it. Yet his less serious published works, for all that they are so much of the day before yesterday, for all the sort of scholar's humour that to later generations seems to suggest some immaturity of vision, have a real gaiety and a sense of delight in form that comes through even to readers who, like myself, are prejudiced against their whole tradition.

It is clear, of course, that Knox's scholarship promised so much more than the pleasant trivia he published; that only the last years of his life allowed him any real intellectual fulfilment. It is this that Mr. Waugh makes the line of his tragedy, for despite the spiritual blessing of his conversion, it is as a tragedy of unfulfilment that he portrays Knox's life. The Roman Catholic hierarchy—for all Knox's and Mr. Waugh's ultimate submission—appears as the villain—a lower middle-class, semi-educated, uncultivated villain, often not even English, but Irish or even in one case a Gibraltarian. We may accept this picture, I think, without qualms, where it describes the first years of Knox's service after his conversion. However Cardinal Bourne may have hoped to create a Catholic Eton or Harrow out of St. Edmund's College, Mr. Waugh does persuade us that Ronald Knox was not the man to do it. His life at Ware with its background of bickering, its narrow cultural standards, and his own hopeless task, must have been exceedingly dispiriting; although even here some part of the disgust we feel as we read of it is, I suspect, conveyed by Mr. Waugh's own feelings rather than those of Knox. The Chaplaincy at Oxford is surely another matter. Mr. Waugh's picture of life at the Old Palace is one of his triumphs of evocation, a splendid set piece, yet I am not wholly convinced by it. The fact that Knox played so full a part in the intellectual life of the pre-1914 Oxford of his own youth was no guarantee of success with the Oxford youth of the late 'twenties and 'thirties. Mr. Waugh rightly insists on this changed world. Yet I still find a colouring of his own prejudices here. Mr. Waugh shrinks from the Left Wing atmosphere of those days. That it was predominant I can attest, for I was a typical Left Wing undergraduate of that time; but it was by no means universal. Certainly among Catholic undergraduates whom I knew the most part rejected the current progressivism. Many of these I remember speaking of Knox not only with affection but with admiration as a witty and fascinating host. It is more than likely that Knox himself may have been often bored by them; but can the picture of such a dispirited, failed career be quite exact? The fact is that Mr. Waugh seems determined to give us a downward curve whichever way we look. If we take the picture back before Knox's conversion to the days of his Anglican *jeunesse dorée* at Balliol Mr. Waugh suggests that the happiness was corroded by growing religious doubt; if we look forward to the years of the translation of the Bible they are clouded by war, while the happy promise of civilised living and scholarly work at Mells was cut short by cancer.

It's a dismal story wherever you pick it up; but can it really have been *felt* so dismally by Knox?—that is what I find hard to believe. There is no reason at all why his vocation as a priest should preclude him from the tastes Mr. Waugh suggests were his true way of life—scholarship in dignified, comfortable surroundings, a certain sort of very English good talk and good living, not perhaps the don's life so much as that of the chaplain of the great aristocratic household. It is sad to see him baulked of this so often, but can he really have been so sad and fretful under the discomforts of rationing and billeting as Mr. Waugh makes him seem? It is not the English scholar and gentleman born out of his time that is suggested, but too often Mr. Wodehouse complaining of the draughts and the noise.

It is so strange that such a picture should emerge when Mr. Waugh was clearly so fond of the original. If one suggested that surely Knox's conversion and more still his priestly vocation must have brought him more joy than is shown in this book, Mr. Waugh would no doubt dismiss this as the sentimental naïveté of a latter-day pagan. Faith and vocation may,

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for all I know, be accompanied by the sadness Mr. Waugh suggests; but not, I believe, the sort of goodness which Mr. Waugh convinces me Knox possessed. The portrait he gives in fact is that of a humane, loving, good man who inexplicably can make no human contacts, whose love of the created world is forever clouded by melancholy, whose goodness shines through a damp mist of disappointment. It is a portrait uncomfortably in tune with the mood of *Men at Arms* and *Officers and Gentlemen*; perhaps Mr. Waugh has not permitted himself enough anger at what he feels to have been the waste of a good deal of Knox's life, and without anger he has sought refuge in this dismal acceptance.

Angus Wilson

Schoolchildren Overheard

The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren. By Iona and Peter Opie. *Oxford University Press.* 35s.

Viewed physiologically, one of the most striking differences between human beings and all other mammals is the very long period of human latency, the years separating the acquisition of complete physical independence, around the age of six or seven, and the onset of puberty something between six and ten years later. There is no mammalian analogue to this long withdrawal from emotional dependence on adults. Although during latency children are still typically nurtured by adults—provided with food and shelter—their emotional life, and most of the time they can control, are spent with their age-mates, until puberty brings them back into the adult world.

In those societies which do not use children's labour, children tend to form themselves into gangs or groups of equals within a fairly narrow age-range. Such gangs or groups have a rapid turn-over in membership, but not so rapid that customs and traditions cannot be established and passed on from one age-group to the next batch of recruits. Boys' gangs are common in a number of societies in all stages of technological development; parallel girls' gangs, or mixed gangs, are less common. In very many societies girls assist their mothers from the moment that they are physically able to do so; and even when the girls' labour is not needed, so high a valuation is often placed on female virginity that it is considered dangerous at any time of life to allow potentially nubile girls any freedom from adult supervision. Although children's gangs have been reported from a considerable number of societies, very little is known about them; as with true secret societies, very few investigators have been able, or have taken the trouble, to discover what goes on in them; and there is consequently considerable reason to be grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Opie for their exploration and description of some aspects of the life of latency groups in Great Britain.

It should perhaps be made clear that the Opies do not themselves employ the concept of latency, nor, for that matter, the concept of puberty; they follow instead the strange notion of British (and American) educationalists for whom adolescence is a sociological, and not a physiological, phenomenon. Because they are dealing with age-grades, and not with physical maturation, they have a short incongruous section on "Attitudes to Opposite Sex," where most of the more important quotations are, clearly, from pubescent girls. Similarly, although they have bravely faced the fact that in latency children in Britain do use rude words on occasion, they have paid little attention to the scatological preoccupations which are common in so many groups; they are not, they say, interested in delinquents.

What Mr. and Mrs. Opie are interested in is the language which schoolchildren use among themselves when the adults are not listening—the catchwords and riddles, the jokes and insults, the private words and agreed phrases which regulate and give order to the children's unsupervised activities; and secondly, to the regularities in behaviour which children manifest outside organised work or games: the rules they have established for their own behaviour and for making other children conform, and the seasonal cycles of special childish activities which are prevalent in different parts of the country. Mr. and Mrs. Opie collected their material from some 5,000 children attending seventy schools, primary, secondary modern, and grammar, in different parts of England, Scotland, and Wales, and one school in Dublin. They have most industriously collated these answers with all the published material they could find on children's language and customs which have been previously noted in Britain, thus giving an historical dimension to their study of contemporary oral traditions. This collation with previously published sources accounts for one of their two most important findings: the very long period during which schoolchild jokes and customs continue unchanged or with only minor modifications. Their other major discovery is that some dialect regional terms are still in constant use among schoolchildren, even though the adults have abandoned them. There

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are not very many of these; but the variants for demanding truce ("Pax") make an impressive glosso-map; so, too, do the terms for playing truant, keeping look-out ("Cave"), and knocking or ringing at the doors of strange houses.

For this last activity they have collected no fewer than 77 terms, though occasionally the variants are slight: in Coventry they play *Rat-Tat-Tat*, in Solihull *Rat-a-Tat-Tat*. The most common term uses the word "ginger" somewhere in the phrase: *Knock Down Ginger*, *Knock Out Ginger*, *Knock Off Ginger*, and so on. Other variants are more picturesque: *Black and White Rabbit* (Manchester), *Cheeky Nellie* (Perth), *Chicky Mellie* (Scots towns), *Knocky Nine Doors* (Cumberland), *Red Apple* (Upton Magna, near Shrewsbury), *Thunder and Lightning* (Sale), and so on through the list.

The wealth and the completeness of the material which the Opies have gathered is quite astounding. Reading it—it is not a book to be read too quickly—I was continuously thinking that I was catching them out, that I was remembering some trick or doggerel or half-belief from my own boyhood which they had not collected; but, by the end of the book, every one of the memories which they had stirred up was duly noted, though quite often not in the position where I had expected to find it. This book has been for me, and I should imagine would be for most readers, a remarkable redintegrative experience; rhymes, riddles, and half-beliefs which I do not think I had consciously recalled for forty years returned to my mind.

On the basis of my own experience, I would question one of the authors' major assumptions: that these beliefs and customs are passed on entirely within the latency world without any intervention of adults. Most of my instruction in this lore—less perhaps in the language—came from my governesses; and when I first went to school at nine I was already quite a proficient. Mr. and Mrs. Opie, it is true, do not deal with children who go to fee-paying schools; but the assumption that adults completely forget their own latency customs, especially when they are in daily contact with latency children, should not have been made without at least some investigation. Similarly, in their somewhat romantic view of the autonomy of the world of schoolchildren, they probably tend to underrate the influence of mass communications addressed to children—comics in the first place, but also children's books, the telly, and the flicks. A further implicit assumption that they make, without much justification, is that all adults speak B.B.C. English; a good deal of the vocabulary which they list as children's slang is actually common to working-class adults and children alike. For example:

> Money, for instance, is various referred to as: brass, lolly, tin, dough, mazuma, moolah, dosh (common), sploosh, bees and honey, and champagne coupons.

Only three of these terms—moolah, dosh, and champagne coupons—are not in Eric Partridge's *Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* as adult terms; and moolah is a common Americanism. In short, in their enthusiasm for their discovery of the uncharted world of the schoolchild, Mr. and Mrs. Opie have made somewhat excessive claims; but even when this excess is discounted, the richness of the material they have collected is impressive.

They have divided their material into eighteen major topics; but it can also be analysed into play and ritual. The play is the more pervasive—playing with words (jokes, puns, riddles, nicknames, chants, counting-out rhymes), playing with emotions (hostility, fear—"ghoulism and spookies"—danger, impropriety, defiance, and all the other risks of life), and playing with property (swopping, giving, and stealing). The ritual is found in the calendrical observances in different parts of the country (one of the most interesting of the book's chapters), in the rules which regulate behaviour between children—the "code of oral legislation"—and in many of the

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organised games and pranks. The latency children are learning to live in an adult world by practising control and self-control in settings which are defined as "not serious." It seems probable that this is, biologically speaking, one of the major functions of latency, and consequently that analogues could be found in any society which permits latency gangs.

I grew up in South-East England and there are many observances reported from other parts of the country which are strange to me; but in the area of my childhood I only notice two major changes from the period around 1914. The "long nose" as a sign of derision has apparently almost completely disappeared; and there is an elaborate system of divination from the serial numbers of bus tickets which is quite new to me. Otherwise my own experience confirms the major thesis of Mr. and Mrs. Opie: the world of latency is remarkably stable, much less modified by changing fashions and inventions than the world of adults.

Geoffrey Gorer

Jones and the Heretics

Free Associations. By Ernest Jones. *The Hogarth Press.* 25s.

When Karen Horney wrote a little book called "Self-Analysis" it was regarded by all true Freudians as the final proof of her debasement. To a Freudian the concept is an absurd anomaly since the whole process of analysis depends on the transference of emotions to another person. It was a mistake, therefore, to expect that an autobiography by the greatest of English Freudians would necessarily yield new depths of self-knowledge. Yet we might, I think, have hoped both for more frankness and for a more skilful introspection than Ernest Jones has given us. He begins his boyhood chapter with a declaration of good intentions.

> Psycho-analysts and other investigators have repeatedly deplored the absence of data concerning childhood sexuality in biographies and autobiographies, so that it would be most unsuitable for me to pass over this important topic. . . . The practice of coitus was familiar to me at the ages of six and seven, after which I suspended it and did not resume it till I was twenty-four.

This seems too good to be true, and proves, indeed, too good to last. If it weren't for our conviction that Jones was the most honest of men in all matters of fact we might well have jibbed at the brilliant foresight of the boy Jones in laying down evidence for the doctor's later theories.

But though, in its middle chapters, the book may disappoint us by differing so little from other autobiographies of the period, it is an interesting work from start to finish. The early chapters, which deal with home and schools in South Wales, are curiously reminiscent of Bertrand Russell's milder tone. Jones, who died last year at the age of seventy-nine, was a little younger than Russell, and his origins could hardly have been more different. But the two, though perhaps they never met, moved steadily towards each other into that post-Darwinian intellectual London of the turn of the century. Rationalism, by this time, had acquired both confidence and irony, although it could still be regarded in a crusading light. Most thoughtful young men had at least *begun* with religious belief, and the process of discarding it, though nothing like so dramatic as it had been thirty or forty years before, was still an event to be remembered for a lifetime.

Here is an example of the Russell-like wit, amiably self-mocking yet making its point with firm self-assurance:

> I was deeply attached to both my parents and regarded myself, indeed rightly so, as a bond of union between them. In our sitting-room I used to sit on a little cane chair between them, symbolising both the desire to unite and, no doubt on a deeper level, to separate them. . . . It was a happy solution of the Oedipus complex that has stood me in good stead throughout my life, for it brought with it an unusual capacity for double loyalties, with little tendency to divided ones.

Ernest Jones was a brilliant young man, who passed a succession of medical examinations with almost monotonous distinction. Yet there was, he tells us frankly enough, a certain brashness in his character, a too evident sense of his own value, which offended many important people on whom his future career depended. A central chapter of the book is entitled "Failure," and it seems that the failure was a daunting one. It is unpleasant to be reminded here that successful careers depend so much on at least the *appearance* of amiability; and if it had not been for psycho-analysis it seems likely that this immensely able and intelligent man would have paid with total obscurity for the comparatively trivial faults of his youth.

But it is, of course, the last chapters of the book which give it a special interest for all of us. Jones first met Freud at a Psycho-Analytical Congress in 1908. The book ends, cut short by the author's death, with Armistice night, 1918.

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These were the formative years of what Jones dislikes us to call the Psycho-analytical Movement. He dislikes us to use that word because it implies, not the discovery of apparent and subsequently proven truths, but the propagation of new, and perhaps dubious, ideas. How we react to these chapters will depend to a large extent on which of these attitudes we have adopted towards psycho-analysis.

If, indeed, we regard the whole corpus of Freud's work as being by now self-evident, or at least as being empirically demonstrated to our entire satisfaction, then we shall read Jones' account of those early disputes, schisms, and re-alignments with an almost complete sympathy. We shall share the author's dismay, even disgust, at the folly and wickedness of all the great heresiarchs. But if we feel, as I do, that the more general discoveries of Freud are probably true but that the lesser dogmas are still open to doubt, then we shall be much more dismayed at the way in which the heresiarchs are treated here. It *sounds* distressingly like the tone adopted by Stalinists when they talk about those early Bolsheviks who departed at various stages from the Truth. It *sounds* like the tone of Roman Catholic historians writing about Arius, Pelagius, and the rest.

Here is a test. See whether it is possible to tell, by the first mention of some early disciple, whether or not he was destined to prove disloyal. I think it *is* possible in every case, simply by the tone and method of description. Stekel, for example, had, from the start,

> the inaccuracy and bad taste of the worst kind of journalist. I recollect his referring in one paper to Sancti di Sanctis, the famous Italian psychiatrist, simply as "Sancti," and when Freud remonstratingly asked him how he would like it as an author if he were referred to as "Wilhelm" he shrugged his shoulders.

The anecdote seems strangely inadequate as a demonstration of the qualities ascribed to poor Stekel.

An even more disturbing example is provided by the treatment of C. G. Jung. After a meeting at which Jones had opposed one of Jung's early heresies,

> he sneeringly remarked to me: "I thought you had ethical principles" (an expression he was fond of); my friends interpreted the word "ethical" here as meaning "Christian" and therefore anti-Semitic.

Whatever we may think of Jung's subsequent career this was surely a grotesque interpretation of a discourteous but perfectly intelligible remark.

In the same way, though Jones makes very deliberate, very minor criticisms of Freud, the Master appears as a Master, wise, tender, humane, omniscient, and infinitely patient. One can only say about all this that the *atmosphere* is a religious one, however often and vigorously this accusation is denied. I write the word "accusation" advisedly, though not in the spirit of Dr. Jones. In the West it has been an unfortunate attribute of all religions and religious substitutes that too much good is spoken of their founders and too much ill of their more divided members. And in this respect the worst offenders have been those pseudo-religions, like Communism, Surrealism, and Linguistic Philosophy, which ardently deny their own nature.

Of course it is not true that psycho-analysis is *nothing but* a pseudo-religion. As a body of brilliant ideas it has altered our attitude to life more than any other movement of the last hundred years. As a method of therapy it has obvious, though not *statistically* obvious, achievements to its credit. But it is still possible to believe that this whole corpus of ideas has proved to be more of an intuitive illumination of the psyche than a new and definitive advance in scientific certainty. It is not this which makes it resemble, in certain circumstances, a religious movement. That transformation occurs whenever a rich and rewarding attitude of this kind is hardened into dogma *without being able to substantiate its dogmas by irrefutable demonstration*. A psychological theory is, by its nature, incapable of doing this, and should resign itself to this inability—or even make a virtue of it, since there are indeed many virtues to be found outside the strictly scientific ones! Thomas Huxley was, in many respects, the Ernest Jones of Darwinism, but how different was his tone! He spoke with the radiant confidence of a man who could *show* that his fundamentalist opponents were mistaken. Nor was Darwin made a god of. Nor have later evolutionists been savaged for their wide divergences from Darwin's thought.

It would be ungenerous to relate the earlier parts of this book too closely to these later chapters. Yet it would have been better if Jones had examined his own attitudes to orthodoxy and heresy with that cool, psycho-analytical eye which he promised us at the start. And it may be that the young Jones, whose self-assurance did him so much harm, was never entirely sublimated. The lack of self-criticism in these later chapters is distressing to all those who recognise the immense debt that we owe both to Freud and to his brilliant lieutenant.

Philip Toynbee

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Men Alone

Free Fall. By William Golding. *Faber and Faber.* 15s.

The Hiding Place. By Robert Shaw. *Chatto and Windus.* 15s.

Mr. William Golding has been praised so highly by many discerning critics that *Free Fall* is something of a disappointment. It consists of a long self-interrogation by its hero, Sammy Mountjoy, who somewhere along the path of his life has suffered a metaphysical fall which has involved the loss of freedom, the capacity of choice, and the gift of self-determination. The fall from freedom is also a fall from grace; when free-will changes to fixed fate the world loses the glory with which it shone in the innocence of childhood.

Sammy was born in a slum, the bastard of a near-prostitute. He is rescued from dirt, squalor, and childish depravity, though equally from innocence, by an eccentric clergyman who adopts Sammy as his ward after the death of his mother; Sammy goes to a grammar school and to an art school in London, flirts with the Communist party, seduces, betrays, and deserts a girl whom he had loved at school, marries a luscious Communist comrade, becomes a distinguished painter, and in the war is captured by the Germans and subjected to a highly refined form of torture by the Gestapo, as a result of which he succeeds in tearing down the veil which lies between him and true insight into his own condition.

Sammy subjects each of these phases in his life to a prolonged and painful examination and dismisses one by one the possible causes of his lapse from freedom and grace. It was certainly not due to the poverty and squalor of his childhood in the slums, for that was the age in which the whole world shone with glory; nor to his seduction and betrayal of the girl he loved, for by that time he had already lost the possibility of choice and acted only under compulsion. If the cause is to be found at all (and we are throughout in some doubt whether any answer can be found to Sammy's self-questioning, because we are by no means sure that the questions he asks have any real meaning) it is to be found in the violence done to his nature by the process of his education, which because of the example of his teachers, both loved and hated, has created a profound division between the emotional and rational elements of his being. But if this is truly the answer, it is by no means a satisfactory one; even granted the possibility of his fall, as Sammy defines it, we do not believe in the efficacy of the causes which are supposed to have been responsible for it.

The truth is that Mr. Golding has set himself a problem in metaphysics, and even if we grant, as some do not, the possibility of metaphysics, it is at the very least doubtful whether fiction is the best medium for solving its problems. Indeed, there are many moments in this novel when one wishes that Mr. Golding could be converted to the view that philosophy is a therapeutic method for getting rid of just such problems as these; for then one feels that he would be free to exercise his many and remarkable gifts as a writer upon material to which they would be better suited. For despite one's disappointment, *Free Fall* leaves one in no doubt whatever about these gifts, and this applies particularly to the early sections of his novel which describe Sammy's experiences as a child of the slums. There Mr. Golding really conveys something of the radiance and glory of childhood, of the warmth and security, as of the womb itself, of Sammy's life with his slatternly and amoral mother, of a world in which men and women are as trees walking; these chapters have a vividness and reality which are not sustained in the rest of the novel and perhaps the best evidence of Sammy's fall is the decline in the quality of Mr. Golding's writing and in the intensity of his imagination which corresponds to it. The early chapters are enough to justify all the praise which has been given to Mr. Golding; in the later ones one feels that he has failed to solve the problem of creating in Sammy an individual of flesh and blood who is also the meeting-point of forces which, if they exist at all, do not belong to the world of the senses which Sammy is supposed to inhabit.

Perhaps it is another aspect of the same fault that Sammy, though he lives in the ordinary world of men and women, loves, seduces, betrays, goes to war, is known to us only through his own feelings and ideas, which at times reach a degree of abstraction in which they seem to be wholly detached from any objects they might have. Sammy is represented as a distinguished painter, but we never see him at work nor can we believe that the actual process of painting is of any importance to him. He is in fact a man alone, and other men and women exist for him only in so far as they stimulate his sensations and ideas; much as we are told of their effect on him we know nothing of his effect on them, except that he sends his betrayed mistress mad; his relation with the world is one way only and perhaps that is why we feel that we are excluded from it.

Something of the same criticism might be made of Mr. Robert Shaw's characters who are also, like Sammy, prisoners of their own minds; though perhaps here the criticism might be

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thought to be unfair since Mr. Shaw has so deliberately created highly artificial conditions in order to isolate them from the world. A British bomber is shot down over Bonn during an air-raid and its crew baling out face either the fury of an angry mob or the mercies of the Gestapo. Two of them, however, Wilson and Connolly, are saved by a German civilian, Hans Frick, who hides them in his cellar which has been converted into an air-raid shelter. He is a Nazi, a patriot, unfit for active service, more than a little mad; by an elaborate system of precautions and subterfuges he keeps his prisoners incarcerated in their comfortable dungeon until long after the war is over; they are lost to the world and the world is lost to them. The obscure instinct which prompted Frick to his initial act of mercy also makes him take care of his prisoners' health, their comforts, amenities, hygiene, amusements, education; he teaches them German and reads Nietzsche's letters to them. His only cruelty is their continued deprivation of liberty long after any need or justification of it has passed; at at least when the only need is his own, for he has become utterly dependent on them as a means of satisfying the thwarted instinct of human brotherhood which has found its only other satisfaction in the National Socialist Party.

In their strange dungeon the two men react according to their natures. Connolly, the younger, an extrovert, thinks only of escape and of returning to his wife; in the cellar where nothing is denied him except the possibility of action he can find comfort only in fantasies of escape and of love. For Wilson the long years in the cellar come not as a denial but as an opportunity of freedom; in civil life a lawyer, in the cellar he becomes a writer, and in exercising what he feels to be his proper gifts finds a greater liberty than any he has lost. But in the end Frick's long experiment with human nature, his own as well as his prisoners', breaks down. When he has to undergo treatment in hospital for heart disease, he releases his prisoners but without telling them that the war has long been over, and they journey down the Rhine going through all the motions of escaped prisoners of war, travelling by night, sleeping by day, avoiding human contacts, behaving in the classic manner of all escapers while all around them they see, with growing bewilderment and depression, the Germany of the "economic miracle," vigorous, prosperous, and to all appearances triumphant in the war which they now conclude must have ended in the defeat of democracy. But in the end the truth is revealed to them and gradually they find their way back to reality and to London; there Frick also joins them, for released from hospital he has come to realise that the only meaning life has for him is that from now on he should try to serve those who had taken him captive while he was still their gaoler.

The Hiding Place is a considerable *tour de force*, especially since it is a first novel. By skilful and careful selection of detail, Mr. Shaw is completely successful in overcoming the inherent improbabilities of his story, and indeed it maintains a high degree of tension largely because one is so interested to see whether he can continue to flout probability to the very end. Fortunately he does not disappoint us, and the later sections of the novel in which the two airmen travel like hunted animals through a liberated Germany has a quality of fantastic and macabre realism which is wholly convincing.

Goronwy Rees

Nehru's Power

Nehru: A Political Biography. By Michael Brecher. *Oxford.* 42s.

It would be difficult to imagine a subject more exciting to the imagination of a political scientist concerned with the realities of political life (and not with the expression of them in some form of professional jargon) than the life of a statesman whose career has been so central to the understanding of one of the most important events of our age—the political emancipation of Asia. And Dr. Brecher who is a Canadian political scientist has done full justice to the opportunity, contriving to make the best use of written and oral sources in India and Britain and to produce out of them a biography of Nehru that is, despite its length, enormously exciting to read and intellectually provocative.

One must add in fairness that part of the attraction is that this is a biography written from the "inside." Dr. Brecher admires Nehru intensely and is completely convinced of the righteousness of the causes he has espoused. This fact makes him somewhat unfair to Britain at times, and it is indeed evident that at no time did he try to make a serious effort to understand the problems of India as they were seen by those responsible for her government—not even in wartime. One feels indeed that Dr. Brecher has managed by an extraordinary feat of sympathetic imagination to make himself more at home in India and with Indians than in England. The list of interviews is rather signifi-

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cant in this respect and no one really at home in the life of England in the inter-war years could confuse the radical politician Sir Charles Trevelyan with his eminent brother the historian. Or to come nearer our own problems, it is curious to mention the Colombo Plan and omit the fact that the initiative was largely Australian and that its implementation has largely rested upon the contributions of Britain and the older members of the Commonwealth.

To say this is not to be ungrateful to the author; for the advantage of the "inside" approach is that he comes to the successive problems that have faced Nehru with about the same degree of understanding and innocence as Nehru himself. Thus he repeatedly and rightly claims for Nehru that he made the Indian national movement under his leadership (and later the Indian government) conscious of the international implications of India's fortunes and of the decisive effect upon them of world events. But Dr. Brecher's own references to the international relations, particularly of the pre-independence era, suggest that like Nehru at the time, he accepts a wholly *simpliste* leftist view. Thus he can chronicle with approval Nehru's denunciations of the policy of "appeasement" which went side by side with his declarations that Congress would not allow Britain to drag India into war. Nor does he find it anything out of the ordinary that Nehru's visit to Russia in 1927 should have affected him so profoundly as to give a decidedly Marxist-Leninist twist to his thinking on world affairs for most of the next two decades—despite the fact that the visit lasted only four days.

Dr. Brecher further quotes Gandhi's remark about Nehru: "he is more English than Indian in his thoughts and make-up." Dr. Brecher is thinking of Nehru as the product of Harrow and Cambridge, of his manifest lack of sympathy with the traditional India with its heavy burden of caste prejudice and superstition. He is thinking of Nehru's insistence upon a secular State devoted to material improvement and of his rejection of much of the inner teaching of Gandhi, with whom his relations were nevertheless so close that it is possible to see them as amounting to a kind of filial dependence, paradoxical in this proud solitary man. Dr. Brecher has to explain the further paradox that in his view apart from his daughter, Nehru's closest friends in the world are Lord and Lady Mountbatten. But one feels that the kind of Englishman Nehru far more resembles is the kind more often found among Wykehamists than Har-

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rovians—the kind who from feelings of guilt and an intense desire to be rid of the burden of responsibility for an existing order of injustice, becomes a rebel to such an extent that he often loses sight of the fact that there are some hard political facts that no amount of right-thinking and high idealism can dispel. The English statesman whom Nehru most obviously resembles in his intellectual development is Sir Stafford Cripps, and it is curious that they should have been brought so closely into contact at one of the crises of the whole story. The anti-Hitler struggle was for the Englishman such an over-riding priority that it brought him to a central rôle in British affairs; Nehru's wartime existence was, as Dr. Brecher puts it, "a constant torment" between "two highly charged political currents. The polar attractions of anti-fascism and Indian freedom were never reconciled."

And it is probable that in Nehru's vacillations over Communist imperialism—in Asia as well as in Europe—we can see again something of the same dilemma of the old-fashioned man of the "Left," for whom "white imperialism" cannot be right and communism cannot be—except when it is a direct challenge to his own authority—ever wholly wrong.

Even more important, however, is the fact that Nehru had never held power before independence—nor had his main associates, except for those who had briefly (and against Nehru's wishes) served in provincial governments between 1937 and 1939. Indeed high office in Nehru's India seems to demand that its holders should have participated in rebellion against the *Raj*, just as to be an American President for some time after the Civil War it was essential to have fought in it. This means that those with experience of the problems of government itself—whether in face of India's internal and deeply rooted disruptive tendencies or of the economic difficulties that have been all-important—have not played the major rôle. Nehru, the product of struggle against authority—the politician and mass-leader—has had to be the ruler and even the bureaucrat. That he has sometimes stumbled is not surprising; the magnitude of the task of self-education must have been tremendous. And in his picture of Nehru the man, grappling with the kind of issue for which so little in his formative years prepared him, Dr. Brecher is at times deeply moving.

But even Dr. Brecher has to admit that for one of the problems nearly always involved in the "transfer of power"—the passage from the rule of a single undifferentiated nationalist party to ordinary democratic rule—Nehru has found no solution, nor within the Congress any probable successor of similar stature. Since the success of Indian democracy matters fundamentally in world politics to-day, this gap in the achievement is an important one. But it does not minimise the achievement in other respects—after all India is a going concern—and even though more of this is due to the inheritance from the *Raj* than Dr. Brecher admits, his contribution to our understanding of it is a major one.

Max Beloff

Two Novels

A Company of Strangers. By JOHN ROSENBERG. *The Hogarth Press.* 12s. 6d.

Broadstrop in Season. By ROBERT KEE. *Secker & Warburg.* 18s.

IF A novel projects a selective semblance of life at all, this semblance should at least have an air of being the real thing. Mr. Rosenberg's problem in *A Company of Strangers* is that his complicated sensibility tends to cloud the air of the real thing, and he seldom gets beyond precariously fictionalised monologue. Harriet Brandon's coach-ride with Brown, the new family tutor, is a passage of isolated brilliance; but so much else of the writing is stale cake. The story itself shows little enough invention—but what can be done with such a mediocre plot? The group solitude of the Brandon family (apparently English country gentry) is fragmented into splinter solitudes by Brown, who seduces Harriet but prefers the bottle, and by a nameless "I" narrator, who abducts her daughter Gwendolen but loses her to two homicidal tramps. The mixture of contemporary sex-morbidism into an undated but, one assumes, roughly fifty-year-old situation (the Brandons have a coach) is particularly saddened by such oh-so-lyrical ingredients as:

> Together, alone, together. Smoothing; softening, warm, wide. Slow beginnings: a creeping to life of the warm-asleep body. Then a springing of heat, colour; round, complete. Holding completeness; she and I crushed together. Fullness; breaking and blooming round each other. Close and still, crushed together, my arms locked and never to be opened, never to be parted; beat, beating into oneness. Heartbeat. Life a pounding, bursting; seas, life surging in the flesh; and nothing denied. Now, comfort aflame; coolness, a flame, and forgetting, remembering, all life, all beginnings; this, this: beginning, ending, beginning; concentration blazing; no mind; no

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thought; soft till agony; not yet to be lost. But tumultuous; ended; complete.

The sentimental monotony of this novel seems like a regression into cliché similar to that of Hermann Hesse's *Rosshalde* fifty years ago—another vain attempt to handle the pathology of solitude without adequate detachment. Surely Mr. Rosenberg is too straight to strike such exhausted attitudes.

Mr. Rosenberg explores quite a different order of things from the urbane Mr. Kee; but *Broadstrop in Season* captivates entirely. There is no sense here of a monologue having been precariously fictionalised: there is the tale, full of meat, creating its air of reality intact, with an uncommon wealth of wit and invention. Yet Mr. Kee is more than just a captivating humorist. Broadstrop is an illuminative character, a kind of cross between a Parsifal and a Prufrock, in whose thoughts and exploits the age takes on meaning. Quite apart from his power to create characters, Mr. Kee has a gift for visualisation, so that a variety not only of incident but also of imagery tracks the strange mutual orbiting of Broadstrop and Lubchick at every station of its progress. Many of his images are hilarious in context, like that of the steady-looking middle-aged woman with her heavy black spectacles and a large fur "like a motor tyre" on her shoulders. The world exposed in this novel may be a select one; but it is exposed with an insight and an irony which detect its minutest tremor, its least evident scintillation. Perhaps the dead-pan anti-climax kind of simile sprinkles the narrative too liberally; but it is seldom slick, and always fixes an exact angle of vision: "A glaze came over his eyes as if he had died and been stuffed," or "He looked like a priest who had been unfrocked for some considerable time" such minute shifts from the obvious put sense and freshness into everything. But Mr. Kee is equally cool in extravagance. The account of the Enfurnham ball has as huge a gusto as Harry Lorrequer's Parisian revels and a magnanimity to boot which makes even Lucky Jim seem square. This is a novel in which nothing is not done to a nicety, and in which sheer entertainment enshrines real subtlety of mind. The author's reflections remind one now and again that this is a book, written well after the 'fifties had subsided. One needs to be reminded.

Christopher Middleton

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LETTERS

Rostow on Don

THERE is one aspect of Mr. Peter Wiles' interpretation of my views ["Don on Rostow," ENCOUNTER, November] that, perhaps, justifies a letter from the author because of its relevance to current Western policy.

I do, indeed, believe that to some relatively minor degree, the focus of Soviet policy and the Russian peoples' expectations on a rise in the standard of living creates attitudes and vested interests which make major aggression somewhat less likely. But Mr. Wiles misreads my argument if he believes I am relying on some automatic force to ensure our safety and create peace. As I said in my lectures at Cambridge: ". . . It is contrary to the whole spirit of this analysis to make a simple mechanical association of this kind between peace and high consumption."

My view is that the Russians at this stage will continue to exploit every weakness that we present to them; and that we are presenting a whole spectrum of weaknesses ranging from the missile gap through the disarray in the Western Alliance, to our failure adequately to back the Indian Third Five-Year-Plan. Aside from correcting our weaknesses, I would rely in my hopes for peace, mainly on the diffusion of power which is already confronting Moscow with sober thoughts in the form of the *n*th power problem.

As for Mr. Wiles' other points, a careful reading of my book when it is published may (or may not) clear them up. At this juncture, I would merely say:

1. I use the concept of a "traditional" society as opposed to Marx's "feudal" society precisely to encompass a wider array than did Marx, including, for example, the Chinese dynasties and the Middle Eastern cases, where the notion of feudalism is misleading.

2. Concerning war, my major point is that economic analysis can supply only a very partial explanation of war; but I would nevertheless defend my notion that the French revolutionary and Napoleonic wars belong in the family of cases in which I place them. French nationalism and the pursuit of military glory served to unify a society which could agree to overthrow the old régime but could not agree on a subsequent domestic agenda.

3. In the preconditions period, I am quite as concerned as was Marx with the kinds of people and groups who carry forward the modernisation process. Our difference is that I do not believe that the commercial and industrial middle class and the profit motive played the preponderant rôle he assigned to them. The modern men are—in the past and at present—a much wider spectrum, embracing some kinds of soldiers, intellectuals, civil servants, etc., as well as men of commerce and industry. They often want modernisation for very different reasons; but a reactive nationalism is initially, at least, a common point of meeting.

4. As an historian, I simply do not agree that the continuity in the long sweep of Russian economic history is a "monstrous irrelevance." Moreover, I believe the current Soviet challenge to the Western world—which is real enough—does not lie in its index numbers of growth but in the nature of Moscow's system of allocating to military and foreign policy as compared with our own. (The Joint Economic Committee of the American Congress published in November a long paper of mine, elaborating the view presented in *The Economist*, should Mr. Wiles or your readers be interested.)

But the main point of this letter is not to debate details with Mr. Wiles; it is simply to use this occasion to make clear that there is nothing in my argument which justifies the view that our dangers will automatically be reduced by the expansion in Soviet consumption; and nothing which justifies the slightest complacency about the state of Western military, diplomatic, and economic policy.

W. W. ROSTOW

M.I.T., Cambridge, Mass.

Shakespeare in America

IF IT were not that most of your readers are in England and hence not in a position to dispute Mr. Robert Brustein's article on Shakespeare in America [ENCOUNTER, September], I would not write to you to correct in some little bit the impressions he gives.

Perhaps my irritation with his airy generalisations stems from my belief that we had outgrown our petty resentments against "Money," to acquire some deeper ones. In essence, Mr. Brustein, described as a "drama critic," prefers Shakespeare in New York's Central Park because it is enjoyed there by the multitude; its *Julius Cæsar* is to be preferred, the inference is, because Mr. Moses attacked Mr. Papp, the producer, for his past political affiliations. He despises Stratford (Conn.) because the secret ingredient is "money"; and Cambridge (Mass.) is beyond the pale because of "trailing gowns and diamond tiaras." The bias of Mr. Brustein's article bespeaks a remarkable new dramatic theory: that the clue to the plays lies in the audience.

I shall concentrate on Stratford (Conn.), where I have seen all the productions put on by Messrs. Landau and Houseman, and shall not dwell on Mr. Brustein's narrow critical horizons in calling *Julius Cæsar* a "brilliant performance" and advancing no reason to support this while spending a great number of paragraphs on the defects of Cambridge (Mass.). In this connection one can only remark that the intemperate critic certainly finds it more easy to demolish, in the process demonstrating his own "wit," than to state what elements in theatre he finds admirable. But, about Stratford (Conn.):

"The American Stratford," says Mr. Brustein, "envisions itself a national institution before it can boast of a single artistic achievement." Leaving

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aside the fact that our critic refers only to the productions of one season, and leaving out likewise all matters of personal taste on "artistic achievements," I would like to correct the implications of institutionalism. Throughout John Houseman's tenure as Artistic Director, he has had one prime aim, an aim that I consider in every sense a worthwhile one, but one that Mr. Brustein in his condemnation of "suburbia" does not even mention: the creation in America of a classical repertory company. If the actors in Cambridge (Mass.) sound as though they came from all parts of the world and were dropped together for the first time on the banks of the Charles, the reason is largely that no such company exists. By creating a company with a minimum of turnover, by developing young actors for the classical stage, by subjecting them to a unified approach towards Shakespeare, Messrs. Houseman and Landau have come a long way towards filling in the lacuna in our theatre. By making Shakespeare vastly popular, by making money (though never enough to cover the annual deficit), by creating a special school programme this last year that played to tens of thousands of students from all over the East, many of whom had never seen a play before (like Central Park crowds?), by touring, a great service has been rendered. It is worth passing note that Mr. Houseman's resignation this autumn was due entirely to his feeling that the trustees of the Festival, by not making a tour possible this year, had undone a great part of his work in creating a year-round classical repertory company.

Likewise, Mr. Brustein's facilely-phrased attacks on the Festival stage and décor are way out of line with the approval alike of actors, critics, and audience. The stage at Stratford and the basic set, the famous "Venetian blinds," are among the most versatile and playable stages in the world; they are free in design, inventive, imaginative, and in a large theatre have made it possible to combine both mass action and intimate scenes. It is perfectly true that in some productions the wizardry of Jean Rosenthal and some of the designers has sometimes obscured the verbal content of the plays, but I suggest that this is due to two things which Mr. Brustein does not mention: that the tradition of theatre in America is not primarily verbal, and possibly cannot be until a unified company is created that has long experience in working together, and visual wealth and exuberance is not to be despised simply *per se*, for a long and viable tradition attaches to such productions. Further, a theatre, a company, an institution, are evolving things: if no production has been *entirely* satisfactory, not one has been balderdash of the sort Mr. Brustein pretends. A theatre and its goals are not to be dismissed because of the homes of the wealthy that surround it and cause such obvious pain to your critic. I am saying, of course, that more service would have been rendered your readers, by talk of Theatre, and less of ambient circumstances for which the Theatre is not responsible.

KEITH BOTSFORD

Meridian Books,
New York

A Reply

I WOULD be delighted to take credit for the "remarkable new dramatic theory" which Mr. Botsford so generously attributes to me (that there is an intimate connection between play, production, and audience), but in all modesty, I must admit that it has been a commonplace of the drama since its beginnings—especially in contemporary America where the very survival of the theatre hinges on the applause of the greatest number. If Mr. Botsford did not learn this during his tenure as Mr. Houseman's assistant, he is probably now aware (or soon will be, when his first issue appears) in his new rôle as editor of *The Noble Savage* that even a magazine is designed for special groups of readers. So let it be with Stratford where these special groups are assumed to be a little larger, a little more reluctant to accept the real thing.

My preference for Papp's productions stems from their intrinsic virtues as faithful interpretations of Shakespeare, free from shiny directorial intrusions and Broadway razz-a-ma-tazz. It is possible to speculate that these productions are good not only because gifted artists are associated with the group but because they are free and therefore under no compulsion to woo those who really don't like Shakespeare. I did not review *Julius Cæsar* at length because I did not see it until my article was in galleys, and thus could only add an appreciative note, but I should be happy to send Mr. Botsford an extended review on request.

As for Stratford, I stand by my initial impressions. The intentions of Mr. Houseman, who has more talent as a producer than as a director, are admirable, but intentions are not achievements even when they are faithfully carried out. Speaking of high intentions and permanent companies, let us remember that one of Stratford's greatest triumphs under Houseman's baton was a production of *Much Ado About Nothing*, set in Spanish Texas (!), and *starring* Katherine Hepburn and Alfred Drake. Stratford, to be sure, has had a permanent company for the last two seasons, but if Mr. Botsford would care to talk to the actors (as I have), he might find them unhappy that they have never realised themselves either as a company or as individuals. If he asked them why, he might find that the directors, who seem to have real doubts about Shakespeare's ability to stand on his own, are more interested in machines and production schemes than in articulate company performances. Mr. Botsford's argument that Stratford's non-verbal orientation reflects America's disrespect for the word I feel no need to answer since it so eloquently supports my "remarkable new dramatic theory."

ROBERT BRUSTEIN

New York

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Marx, Engels, and Can-Can

I AM surprised that your otherwise ever-alert FROM THE OTHER SHORE correspondent did not follow up Comrade Khrushchev's recent burst of horror at the sight of the French Can-Can in Hollywood. In his subsequent meeting in San Francisco with Walter Reuther and other American labour leaders, the following (N.Y. *Times*, 23 Sept.) took place:

"Unexpectedly, Khrushchev, still on his feet, gave a burlesque demonstration of his idea of the can-can he witnessed during the Hollywood rehearsal of the forthcoming film, *Can-Can*. He turned his back to the table, bent downward, flipped his coat up and gave an imitation of the can-can.

KHRUSHCHEV: This is a dance in which girls pull up their skirts. You're going to see that; we are not. This is what you call freedom—freedom for the girls to show their backsides. To us it's pornography. The culture of people who want pornography. It's capitalism that makes the girls that way. . . .

F. Engels

—Does the Chairman think that the girls should be prohibited by law from showing their backsides?

KHRUSHCHEV: There should be a law prohibiting the girls from showing their backsides, a moral law. . . ."

Students of Marxism would doubtless be interested in the theoretical (and possibly moral-aesthetic) implications of the change from Marxism to post-Stalinism on this subject. May I refer you to a relevant letter written by Friedrich Engels to Karl Marx on July 27th, 1846? It was posted from Ostend, where Engels was evidently busily engaged observing the amusing faces and figures on that fascinating shore. His letter includes the above sketch (*see inset*), and perhaps the attitude of the Founding Fathers could be deduced from the invitation of Engels to Marx to "come soon." Your experts on Eastern and Western shores should find both in *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe* (Berlin, 1929), III, 1, p. 27.

N. N.

New York

Morals and Devlin

THERE is, I think, another ground than Richard Wollheim's on which to object to Sir Patrick Devlin's conclusions about the Enforcement of Morals [ENCOUNTER, November].

Sir Patrick's first question runs: "Has society the right to pass judgment at all on matters of morals? Ought there, in other words, to be a public morality, or are morals always a matter of private judgment?"

The answer to this depends on an affirmative answer to another question, "Can society pass judgment at all on matters of morals?" Here, the answer is, "Only sometimes," and so Sir Patrick's first question must also be answered "only sometimes," and the same with his second question, "Has society the right to use the weapon of the law to enforce its judgment?"

The kind of moral matter society is not able to judge is particularly the whole range of self-judgments, the whole range of judgments an artist or a professional man makes about his work (this side of negligence, that is), and many others. These are not beyond the reach of society's laws because of society's tolerance but because of society's incapacity.

ELIZABETH YOUNG

London

The P.E.N.

FIRST of all I would like to state that the Hungarian Press never published the text of the Chamson-Moravia-Kaestner-Carver telegram on behalf of the imprisoned Hungarian writers [ENCOUNTER, October and December]. Not even by the Budapest literary journal which is edited by the Party functionaries who act as officers of the Hungarian P.E.N. Neither was the Hungarian public informed about the Frankfurt resolution to re-admit the Hungarian Centre, because the wording clearly stated that the Budapest functionaries deviated from the P.E.N. spirit and statutes. The Hungarian Press carried only short reports about the re-admission as "a great victory" over the cold-warmongers. Déry, Hay, and twenty-two other Hungarian writers are still in prison. So the re-admission of the Hungarian Potemkin-P.E.N. was nothing more than a gesture towards peaceful *ideological co-existence*.

My reading of the Soviet and satellite Press suggests that, according to the Kremlin line, peaceful co-existence (a Good Thing) should not be confounded with peaceful *ideological* co-existence (a Bad Thing). The intellectuals of the Sino-Soviet orbit are reminded all the time that they should "wage a relentless ideological struggle against all non-Marxist-Leninist views." How then can we of the P.E.N. be accused of cold-warmongering if we stick to our own "bourgeois-liberal" views about freedom of writing? Had we done this in Frankfurt, our international organisation of certain types of *clubs* would not have re-admitted a different type of *club*. Clubs have the right to choose their members. The P.E.N. clubs happen to have very "old-fashioned" rules about freedom of conscience and opposition to censorship and oppression. I personally think that we ought to have been sticklers about our rules. But the majority of delegates were instructed by their centres to vote otherwise. On the question of the Hungarian P.E.N., nineteen

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delegates voted against our P.E.N. Charter, nine were neutral and abstained, and only nine voted for it. Each national centre has only one vote. The harm was done at the various national P.E.N. Club meetings when the delegates were instructed. It is difficult to understand why, for instance, the English, French, Belgian, Swiss, and Australian P.E.N.s instructed their delegates to vote for the re-admission of the Budapest Centre, and why the Americans abstained. I think—and hope—that they simply were not fully informed.

GEORGE PALOCZI-HORVATH

London

"Sitting on a Time-bomb"

I SHOULD like to regard my Penguin *Strategy for Survival* and Alastair Buchan's review of it in the last ENCOUNTER as contributions to a continuing debate, and to answer the review. The argument, after all, is about what ought to be done, and that is more interesting than any blue-nosed custom about "not answering reviews."

It may well be true that, as Mr. Buchan says, I am at one with all but a handful of planners both here and in Washington in rejecting the policy of massive retaliation. He implies that the rejection was hardly worth dwelling on. But look at the handful. It includes the British Minister of Defence as far as we know; the Statement of the 1958 White Paper that massive retaliation is our policy still holds good. Moreover, Mr. Buchan does not take account of the fact that massive retaliation is a natural phase through which every nation joining the nuclear club is bound to pass. There are writers and planners enough in Paris now to make up more than a handful, and if we go on as we are now going, there will be the same phase in Bonn, Pankow, Prague, Peking, Stockholm, Rome, Berne, Tel Aviv, Delhi, Warsaw, etc., etc. Mr. Buchan has seen through this policy, and so have I. Unfortunately, we cannot between us change the direction of the world without writing and speaking.

He says that I dismiss the strategy of limited nuclear war for very sound reasons, and immediately afterwards takes me to task for not considering "whether it may be necessary to maintain a capability for limited nuclear war" on NATO's flanks. (I do as a matter of fact consider it.) But if limited nuclear war has "appalling disadvantages" in Europe, how does it escape them in Asia?

He says that the setting up of a supranational authority in NATO is an "Aunt Sally" and "an idea which I have never heard seriously propounded elsewhere." I have never heard it seriously propounded either, but I am not sure it is not slowly happening, all the same—growing up, like the British Constitution. The interested reader should consult *Hansard* for June 17th, 1959, cols. 429–432, and July 8th, col. 1361–1367 and 1386. From these he will see that the British Government believed it had no right to be consulted about the transfer of American nuclear bombers from French bases to West German bases. General Norstad wished it, the American, French, and German governments agreed, and that was that. But if General Norstad is free, without British approval, to transfer nuclear bombers to Germany because General de Gaulle won't have them in France, he is also free, say, to transfer them from Germany to Turkey if a revolt against Russian rule breaks out in Georgia. Such an action would clearly increase the likelihood of a Russian attack on Turkey and, by the terms of the North Atlantic Treaty, an attack on any member is to be regarded as an attack on all, and Britain would thus be involved in war without having been consulted about the political and military move which contributed to its outbreak. Such a chain of events adds up to a picture of something very like a supranational military command, since if the allied commander, with the agreements of only some national governments in the alliance, can involve the other national governments in a war which they may wish to avoid, he is in effect supranational.

The above is an unlikely chain of events, and I do not claim that General Norstad has in fact shown himself yet to be a supranational military commander. Only that it is not a complete "Aunt Sally."

"The mistakes of fact and nomenclature are, in this section as elsewhere in the book, too numerous to inflict upon the reader." Well, I'm sorry about this; perhaps Mr. Buchan will let me have a list of them for future editions. One of the troubles is that the NATO set-up is pretty impenetrable to an independent enquirer; it is probably difficult for anybody on the inside—and Mr. Buchan is Director of the Institute for Strategic Studies—to imagine how impossible it is for a writer with no *locus standi* to get near the international soldiers and planners who are actually running our defence affairs, especially if they know he is on the whole critical of present policies. My mistakes are at least in part due to the official secrecy which I so much lament in my pamphlet, a secrecy which makes properly informed debate impossible.

Mr. Buchan objects that I did not enquire into the reasons why Britain and France decided they should have their own nuclear weapons, and lists them. He includes political, economic, "prestige," commercial and scientific considerations, and says that only when these have been "met" can the strategic policy be changed. No; this is just it. If the strategic policy threatens the extinction of civilisation, then all the secondary considerations must go by the board. To say they must be met first is to say that, for instance, it is worth risking humanity for a few headlines in the world press (prestige) or for the standard of life of a Gascon peasant (economic) or for the development of new raw materials in the generation of electricity (scientific) or for high profits at Luton and a brisk turnover in the City of London (commercial). We should be quite clear that it is not worth risking humanity for any of these.

I am puzzled by Mr. Buchan's last paragraph. He says it is a pity I should have laid myself "open to being defeated in detail by the obscurantists through giving battle on the wrong ground," but the outline he gives of what would have been the

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right ground reads like a summary of some of the arguments in my pamphlet.

WAYLAND YOUNG

London

[ALASTAIR BUCHAN writes: *I cannot help feeling that Wayland Young is making a great mistake in trying to defend himself in this way, and I could write a considered reply if it wouldn't bore your readers to extinction. The two points I would make are—first, that General Norstad would not have authority to transfer nuclear bombers from Germany to Turkey without consulting the allied governments. This would require the authority of the Standing Group and of the* NATO *Council in Paris. Secondly, he defends himself against inaccuracy on the grounds of official secrecy. I have no greater access to official secrets than he has, and the mistakes I had in mind were entirely those of fact, which can be checked from a good reference library.*]

"Beastly to the Germans"

I DON'T care much about Herr Alexander's opinions (Terence Prittie, "The English and the Germans, ENCOUNTER, November). If the paragraph beginning "The sad—but—true . . ." is Prittie's opinion, I am sorry. First, it is a lie that I have ever said that Germans deserve no sympathy. They deserve freedom, happiness, prosperity like everyone else. They do not deserve Power. Second, the truly irresponsible are those who advocate the reunification of Germany without any certainty that Germans will be finally content with the Oder-Niesse line.

A. J. P. TAYLOR

Magdalen College,
Oxford

"A Stranger in Dublin"

DUBLIN does not reveal itself too easily to the stranger and, perhaps, feeling Mr. James Morris' unsympathetic gaze upon it, it failed to declare itself to him at all [ENCOUNTER, December].

For travellers who are insensitive to atmosphere, particularly of a subterranean kind, Dublin at least has something visual to offer. But the visitor must be equipped with a visual sense, or at least a love of Georgian architecture. Where both are lacking, one would suppose that familiarity with works of James Joyce would make a writer aware that there is a quality about Dublin that is not immediately discernible. And Dublin to-day is only superficially different from the Dublin of "Bloomsday."

As an example of inept reporting your correspondent refers to "the glorious conservatism of the Shelbourne Hotel . . ." and makes a reference to the lifts "stately as Cunarders." (Since when did Cunarders move only vertically?) The real joke is, though, that the Shelbourne has recently been completely modernised and its management does not consider it to be conservative at all.

One must deplore the false and far-fetched imagery where Mr. Morris likens poor Dublin shawlies to "coelacanths from the deep." Equally, one regrets to see you publish the sort of writer who says in parenthesis "one is almost tempted to say"—and then says it.

Mr. Morris refers to the tolerance with which the custodian of the Lane Bequest reveals the empty galleries to the tourist. If he imagines the Irish are complacent about the Lane pictures, he should ask Sir John Rothenstein why he has screwed all the pictures in the Tate Gallery to the walls.

True, "Aerphort" (Airport) written in Irish script is a piece of inexcusable silliness, but it seems too easy a jibe unless some responsible explanation is made about the use of the Irish language in Ireland to-day.

Recurrently Mr. Morris indicates a nostalgia for Yeats, the Abbey Theatre, and the good old days of the 19th-century literary revival—in which he never participated. What he does not realise, to quote a contemporary Dubliner, is that *these* are the good old days.

PETER LUKE

Stephen's Green Club,
Dublin

[JAMES MORRIS writes: *People always say you are an inept reporter if you don't flatter their city—the more provincial the city, the more inept they say you are. All the reporter can do (I hope I did) is make it clear that he is simply recording impressions. I did, however, stay at the Shelbourne: and as for the parenthesis, well, somewhere between the temptation and the statement, my resolution failed me!*

One statement in the article I do regret: to suggest that Dublin is "less hopeful" than Prague was carrying disappointment too far.]

Steel and Capitalists

ANDREW SHONFIELD writes on Labour Party policy [ENCOUNTER, September] that "the sole purpose of transferring the ownership of steel to the State is in order to exercise the function of management more effectively in the interests of society. This clashes with the new doctrine, for steel is no worse managed than the rest of private enterprise." The two successive sentences beg the question. The case for steel nationalisation is not that the industry is "worse managed than the rest" but that, in private ownership, it is conducted in such a way as to clash with "the interests of society."

Briefly, our capacity to produce steel is nowhere near adequate to meet the demand under full employment. This was shown clearly enough in 1955 when the boom led to a sharp rise in steel imports. This helped to produce a balance of payments crisis, the domestic price of steel rose considerably and industrial production was held back, in some cases, owing to short supplies. No one has shown

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the reasons for this more cogently than Mr. Shonfield himself. In *Britain's Economic Policy Since the War* he explained that a steel industry with the capacity to meet peak demands would have to carry sizeable stocks during recessions. This would be unprofitable for the industry but highly profitable for the economy as a whole. An expanded steel industry would make possible a more rapid growth in industrial production without excessive imports or rising domestic prices. This would more than compensate the nation—but not the industry—for the costs of stock-carrying during the troughs.

Mr. Shonfield is one of the leading exponents of the "high-investment rapid-expansion" school. It is a pity that he does not draw the logical conclusion. The Labour Party included steel nationalisation in its programme for utilitarian reasons, not as a symbolic concession to its left wing. For another five years, at least, the industry will remain in private hands and the nation will be the loser.

HENRY COLLINS

Oxford

[ANDREW SHONFIELD writes: *Mr. Collins makes a good point about the recurrent failure of the British steel industry to increase its productive capacity sufficiently to meet the needs of the engineering industries during periods of boom demand. But this seems to me to be a national problem—related to the ordinary British capitalist's attitude towards investment, his unwillingness to believe in the likelihood of economic expansion on the scale that has become easily achievable in the 20th century—rather than to anything inherent in capitalism itself. After all, the success of American and German capitalists in the steel business, who have kept pace with high demand, has to be explained too.*

In the face of this experience of the steel industry abroad, it does not seem plausible to argue that nationalisation of steel is the unique and necessary remedy for the recent failure of certain sectors of the British industry to expand fast enough—unless, of course, it is thought that British capitalists are of their nature inferior to American and German capitalists.]

Wanted: New Slogans

"The people are tired of the same old clichés—
Go out and find some new ones!"

SAM GOLDWYN.

MR. SHONFIELD'S critique of Labour's intellectual inadequacy is correct as far as his economics go ["A Deadlock on the Left," ENCOUNTER, October], but he appears to be wide of the mark where its psycho-political implications are concerned. I think his over-rationalised approach is to blame, in the sense that he concentrates on the content of Labour's economic ideology to the exclusion of its political functions.

Labour is unable to stop repeating the old slogans to which it remains compulsively attached, in spite of distinguished reformulations by the Crossland school which have been largely accepted by Gaitskell and his associates. But it is a commonplace that compulsive attachment to ideas springs from the fact that they meet certain needs; it is rarely cured by demonstration of their fallaciousness, but only by obviating the need for them—or replacing them by other attachments which do not impinge on ability to perform necessary functions.

Mr. Shonfield berates Labour for attachment to what he calls "inapplicable ideas" and inability to adopt "the new ideas required to meet the radically-changed needs of the working class of the late 1950's. . . ."

What the Labour Party needs is not convincing that its old slogans are incorrect or inapplicable—most of them have an unpleasant feeling that this is so somewhere at the pit of their stomach—but some new slogans which would provide them with *rationale* self-righteousness, *esprit de corps*, and all the other spiritual blessings which help win elections. This is no easy matter. Slogans which are both relevant and applicable are usually mundane and uninspiring, and in any case the Tories have pre-empted too many of them. Scientific research is a worthy enough objective, but it would bring out few Labour stalwarts canvassing or holding street-corner meetings in wet weather. Crosslandic scepticism is valid, if hardly original, but would not inspire martyrs. What Mr. Shonfield must find, if he is to talk Labour out of his predicament, is two or three blood-boiling causes which can be summed up in five-word slogans.

Perhaps ENCOUNTER could run a competition.

ALFRED V. SHERMAN

London

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AUTHORS

We do not know, of course, but it is conceivable (as Leopold Labedz writes) that young **Abram Tertz** belonged to those groups of new young writers, especially in Leningrad and Moscow, whose fresh voices were briefly heard during 1956, the first year of the Russian thaw. But Tertz, unlike the contributors to those surprising two volumes of *Literaturnaya Moskva*, writes, at least in *"The Trial Begins . . ."* with no thought to censorship. It must be a dizzying prospect simply to write as one pleases, even if the price is publication abroad to an audience of strangers in a foreign language. Still, it has almost become a modern Russian tradition; and if only by accidental reverberation there are echoes of Zamyatin (rather than of Orwell), of early-Ehrenburg-in-exile (rather than Koestler's Rubashov).

Some time ago Isaac Deutscher contemptuously referred to Pasternak (in an essay in *Les Temps Modernes*) as "a voice from the grave." For him, as for many of the official critics in Moscow, the *Zhivago* novel was completely alien to the contemporary Soviet-reading public, and its moral problems of no possible interest; nor could Soviet youth conceivably have anything in common with this anachronistic relic of pre-revolutionary Russian intelligentsia. Alas, the more things change the more they remain the same. If Tertz writes with a touch of the desperate irony of Marek Hlasko's generation, he also has Dostoievsky's Grand Inquisitor at his back. There are many roads for a Russian writer beyond the confines of the official Soviet æsthetic, but escape from its confines first he must.

Abram Tertz's story would almost appear to be a practical illustration of the theoretical critique which has been written in Russia under the title, "What is Socialist Realism?" (It has been anonymously published, first in France in *L'Esprit* and then in Britain in *Soviet Survey*. Both *Kultura* in Paris and *Tempo Presente* in Rome have published translations of the two documents together.) He shows himself at least in this to be quite the trained young Marxist, involved always in the unity of theory and practice; the problem is how to overcome—philosophically, psychologically, and artistically—the official Communist creed.

> The works of socialist realism are in various styles and on various subjects. But in all of them, you will find more or less directly, and in a form either explicit or hidden, the idea of a Purpose [the Aim, the Objective, the End: *Tsel*]. It is found as a panegyric of Communism and everything connected with it, or as a satire of life in its "revolutionary development," which means to say (I must stress it again) in its movement towards Communism. . . . Like our whole culture, like our whole society, our art is teleological to the marrow of its bones. It submits to a higher destiny and so is sublimated. When you really get down to it, all we live for is to bring Communism about as quickly as possible. . . .

It is perhaps among the more pleasing ironies of our time that it has remained for the young East European writers to provide the kind of moral and æsthetic substance which might have sustained the "angry young man" movement of Western Europe.

> To abolish prisons for ever we have built new ones, to bring down the frontiers between states we have ringed ourselves round with a Great Wall of China, to make our work in the future restful and pleasant we have introduced forced labour, to avoid spilling a single drop of blood we have killed and killed endlessly. . . . In the name of our Target we have had to sacrifice all we inherited and to use the same methods as our enemies: proclaim the omnipotence of Russia, write lies in *Pravda*, put a new Czar on the empty throne, bring officers' epaulets into fashion again and with them torture. . . . Sometimes it seems as if all that was needed for the final triumph of Communism was one last sacrifice: the renunciation of Communism. . . . Lord, Lord, forgive us our sins! After all, this world was created in the image and likeness of God. Communism has not yet become Him, but it is near enough. And we arise, staggering with weariness, gaze round the whole universe with our blood-filled eyes, and see nothing of all we hoped to find.

It is in his novella that this young Russian makes his final accounting with "socialist realism," especially in the irony of the Epilogue where he confesses that his "positive heroes" were not portrayed in all fullness, but were malicious and one-sided. In his theoretical essay the author explained:

> Stalin's death gave a mortal blow to our system of religious æsthetics, and what sort of a substitute is it to revive the cult of Lenin? Lenin is too much like a normal man, he looks too realistic: bald, short, and bourgeois. But Stalin seemed to have been created specifically for the hyperbole that awaited him. Mysterious, all-seeing, omnipotent, he was a monument of our age and the only thing he lacked to become God was immortality. Oh, if we had only been clever and ringed his death round with miracles! If we had only declared on the wireless that he wasn't dead but ascended into heaven, whence he continued to watch us, silent behind his mysterious whiskers! His relics would have cured the paralysed and the possessed, and children at bedtime would have prayed at the window, their eyes fixed on the shining stars of the celestial Kremlin.

In his prefatory note to the Italian translation of *"The Trial Begins . . ."* Gustave Herling has noted:

> Anyone with a sense of literary style—not the

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style you find in isolated phrases, but what is hidden in small, scarcely perceptible details and in the modulations of the writer's voice—cannot fail to note its very special atmosphere, which has something in it of the terrible Soviet neo-classicism. It is as if the author, drawn by his talent to the grotesque, at occasional moments holds up to the vulgar face of his society a deforming mirror, framed with little gold columns in the worst neo-classical taste. . . .

More than that: anyone with a sense of what has been happening in our time—and not the sense as recorded by dogmas, slogans, propaganda and counter-propaganda, but what is hidden in the documents of the imaginative spirit—cannot fail to notice its very wonderful atmosphere, which has something in it of wonderful Russian truthfulness.

Here both the young Russian critic and the young Russian story-teller (they seem at the very least to have learned something from each other) are at one:

I place my hopes in a phantasmagorical art: an art which would have hypotheses instead of goals, an art in which the grotesque would replace the realistic in the description of everyday life. This is what would best respond to the spirit of our age. May the unearthly imaginations of Hoffmann and Dostoievsky, of Goya and Chagall, of Mayakovsky . . . may these teach us how to express truth through the fantastic and the absurd! . . .

Recently at a peace congress in Melbourne, Mr. J. B. Priestley (thinking of Tibor Déry) argued, vainly, for a resolution claiming "freedom for every true artist to express and communicate his vision of life and its delights and complexities. . . ." Abram Tertz, we think, would have appreciated the irony that he found himself in a minority of one.

*

The article by **Richard Hoggart,** who is the author of a book on W. H. Auden and whose important study of *The Uses of Literacy* is now available in a Penguin edition, is based upon a section of the "Will F. Harvey Memorial Lecture" for which we are grateful to the Governors of Fircroft College.

Sylvia Sprigge has just completed a biography of Bernard Berenson which will shortly be published by Allen & Unwin.

The drawing at the end of the Berenson article (on p. 63) is, of course, by **Saul Steinberg,** and is taken from S. N. Behrman's book on *Duveen* (Hamish Hamilton), in which there is, readers will recall, a memorable chapter about "B. B." . . . **Dwight Macdonald,** whose article, "No Art, No Box Office," we published in the July ENCOUNTER of last year, would like to call attention to the fact that it was first published in the March 1959 number of *Esquire* on whose assignment he was commissioned to do the "Letter from Hollywood." . . . **Pierre Schneider** writes: "Your five lines about me in your October *'Authors'* are very poetic. I am young, I do live in Paris, and I write. But the book to which you refer was not called *Quatres Saisons* but *Les Cinq Saisons*. It was not my first published volume, but the third, having been preceded by another volume of essays called *La voix vivre* and by a study on *Jules Renard*. (Nor is it my latest, for I have just published a volume of dialogues called *L'Unique source*.) As for your kind remark that *Les Cinq Saisons* 'was widely praised by French literary critics,' may I say, sadly, that it was greeted by near unanimous silence. . . ."

In our issue for August, 1959, we published an article by Mr. Paul Ignotus. It has been suggested that the reference to a Great Friend of Hungary implied that the person in question was unpatriotic. We should like to make it clear that the article was not intended to convey this, and we wish, therefore, to apologise for any imputation of this kind which may have been unwittingly conveyed by the article.

Index to Volume XIII

The Index to Volume XIII (June–December, 1959) will shortly be available and will be sent, free of charge, on application to ENCOUNTER, 25 Haymarket, London, S.W.1.

Standing orders for future indexes can be accepted, but readers who applied previously need not apply again as they will receive the new index automatically.

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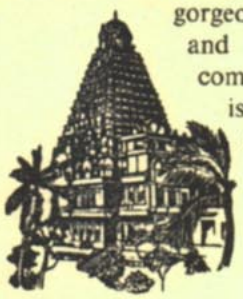

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